

Modernism and Education

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THE NATURE OF MIND DESTRUCTION

One had to cram all this stuff into one's mind, whether one liked it or not. This coercion had such a deterring effect that, after I had passed the final examination, I found the consideration of any scientific problems distasteful to me for an entire year... It is in fact nothing short of a miracle that the modern methods of instruction have not yet entirely strangled the holy curiosity of inquiry; for this delicate little plant, aside from stimulation, stands mainly in need of freedom; without this it goes to wrack and ruin without fail. It is a very grave mistake to think that the enjoyment of seeing and searching can be promoted by means of coercion and a sense of duty.

Albert Einstein

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Avant Propos

The principles of learning and child development reveal the contradictory and self-destructive nature of the socially imposed norms and requirements of post-industrial culture - education being its major constituent. By education, I mean the methods of socializing and institutionalizing a person that span the period from infancy through university; in other words, any social institution that claims the right of transmitting the necessary skills¹ to members of society.

Contemporary globalized² education derives its method from the cultural essence or goal that originated in Western Europe and that stifled other indigenous methods of cultural transmission around the world. These methods are thus based on the goals of a society that needs to instill fear and subordination. The methods of grading and policing thought processes that are behind the construction of post-industrial society are also its indispensable components. In this light, grades tell more about the one who grades than about the one being graded. However, in practice, people believe that grades belong to the sphere of the natural, organic methods of evaluating the organic possibilities of an organic person and that without them they cannot regulate and stimulate learning and development. If this sounds farfetched or convoluted, I hope that this paper will

¹Skills include *habitus* as well as the values and knowledge about the world and one's place and role in it. I shall discuss the role of *habitus* further in the paper.

² I use the term *global* to denote any colonizing practices that have taken place before in history or are

successfully expose some of the problems and contradictions in practice and terms.

These terms and notions may have biologicistic, deterministic, functionalist, structuralist and whatever other post- or pre-connotations. It is not surprising, for we can hardly escape our predecessors who have in waves taken root, then grown into trees, shed leaves and gone to sleep in our iconographic educational methods. I hope that the reader will venture with me beyond the binding explanations.

Introduction: On Learning and Love

Most Americans don't really like children... even their own! Adults don't trust youngsters, and school is an institutional expression of that fact. To put it another way, one of the foundation stones on which schools rest is a great big rock that says children are mostly no damn good. I know that's true... I've spent a lot of time observing how society treats children. Look, I could give you a ten-hour interview entirely on the subject of adults' feelings towards young people, but let me tell you just one tiny example. I recently read a construction design manual that was full of surveys showing buyers' preferences concerning townhouses and clustered housing. And the number-one concern of potential owners was that they not live in a place where they could hear the sounds of children playing. They weren't talking about the noises of youngsters smashing bottles or having gang fights with zip guns, mind you... no, the buyers queried were objecting simply to the sounds of children having a good time together.

John Holt³

taking place now.

³In an interview with Robert Gilman, summer 1984.

Any production, ideal or material, cultural or mundane depends on the forces that drive individuals to reproduce their species; for, the production of ideas and objects is possible only through the reproduction of bodies, minds, and souls to carry forth meaning and ideas, where our selves and our creations – i.e. our culture – can ensure survival only if its meaning and knowledge are transmitted to the generations that come.

Our existence itself thus owes to a combination of forces such as the physical (or biological), mental, emotional, and other elements known and unknown to us that hold us together in the form and experience of a human being.

The initial force that pushes us to create and procreate is the desire to create and procreate regardless of our mortality, or perhaps because of it. This desire forms the basis of certain emotions and forces that drive a living creature to "give" the most of oneself - knowing that what we give will remain with this other self that we help come into the world we leave behind. This giving includes imparting one's time, effort, genes, blood, emotions, material and non-material heritage such as knowledge, language and everything that is included in all the previously mentioned and unmentioned gifts to life.

The forces of giving and creating are at the core of the sentiment that many languages designate as "love". This definition of love is antithetical to the same term used in Western languages and which Freud⁴, as a perspicacious observer of Western culture and

⁴Freud, S. Civilization and its Discontent.

values, defines as the desire to possess the object of personal gratification.

Since the sentiment that drives a living being to give and to create gives the feeling of gratification, sometimes, any feeling of gratification can be mistaken for love. Freud's definition of this term is a perfect illustration of such confusion. Semantically, the term "love" retains its original positive value and connotations, while in practice, giving has been substituted with taking or possessing. Thus, the forces that prompt "life" have been replaced with those that prompt "death" - since whatever we keep and don't transmit dies within us (as memory) and with us.

Literacy and historical monuments are an attempt to overcome this problem of death. They are also an attempt to render redundant human contact. However, since texts and monuments can be useful only when understood, the transmission of meaning remains vital and hence there is a constant battle, a pull back and forth, between the forces of selfishness and gratification with the forces of giving and love. The victory in this battle has been inaugurated with the establishment of educational facilities as an institution.

To reiterate the above point, at the basis of life lie the forces of love and reproduction, while at the basis of personal gratification that prompts the desire to possess - which is the opposite of transmit - lie the forces of death. Education is the method of expressing and transmitting these forces of life and death - a method that promotes a specific culture and society. In contemporary globalized capitalist culture, it heeds the destructive forces because its logic is to separate children from parents, to "liberate" parents from children and thus to

break the intimacy of their relationship. It inculcates a specific world-view and hierarchy in order to create individualism that is falsely believed to be self-sufficient seeking constant self-gratification through consumerism and the possession of living and non-living objects of desire.

This contradiction between culture and nature becomes more apparent if we consider the physiological development of living beings.

What, when, and how do people learn

Ilya A. Arshavski, a Soviet physiologist, studied children's learning and human behaviour at the laboratory for developmental physiology, which he directed between 1935 and 1978 in Moscow. After the laboratory was closed down, he continued his research and publications until his death in 1996 at the age of 93.

In his work, he revealed the tight relationship and the interdependent processes of learning and growth and proposed a thermodynamic theory of individual development of organisms. In light of his teacher Ukhtomski's notion of variations of weight of living systems, Arshavski discovered that movement and activity bring about the surplus anabolistic processes that result in the organism's growth and development⁵.

⁵Arshavski.

Lena A. Nikitina⁶, a Russian educational theorist, discusses Arshavski's findings in light of Ukhtomski's notion of *dominanta*.

First, Nikitina cites the Energetic Rule of Motion: “If I move - I grow”; and: “as long as I move - I live”. This rule works because of the principle of surplus anabolism or the process of surplus restoration: when the energy storage has been depleted, the organism recovers and stores more for future use. Hence, by reaching the limits of our capacity – i.e. by using up our storage - we increase it. This process affects muscle, bone and organ growth, including the brain. The reverse is atrophy.

The second rule states that in order for growth or learning to occur, the organism has to reach its maximal level of stress. However, this stress level should ALWAYS stay within the limits of physiological stress that can only be determined and regulated from within and NEVER from without. In the case of stress from outside the organism, it transforms from the stress of pleasure to the negative stress of destruction. In short: with all my might but within the limits of pleasure, Nikitina "translates".

We can already see that these two rules have been evicted from the educational establishment where children are forced to sit and be quiet for unnatural lengths of time and whose bodies and selves are controlled with outside forces and curriculum.

The processes that govern learning and growth include the organizational work, which Ukhtomoski called *dominanta*.

The *dominanta*, explains Nikitina, is the main organizer of our brain. It concentrates all of ourselves towards the achievement of a

⁶Nikitina, L.A. *To the Parents of the XXIst century*.

particular goal passing through four stages and relying on specific conditions.

Stage 1: Excitement: the *dominanta* collects resources, concentration, energy, memory, creativity for a specific task and mostly works with nerves.

2: The domains (of the brain) not necessary for the specific task slow down and switch off. They stop reacting to stimuli that do not concern the task.

3: In the meantime, the brain is busy "sorting out" stimuli from within and without - most of which the brain blocks out or brakes down while letting in those that are helpful to the task in question.

4: The task is concluded. The exhausted "artel"⁷, i.e. the cells of the main centre of excitement, slows down and goes to rest during which time restoration of "work energy" occurs with surplus (anabolism). This occurs ONLY on condition that the *dominanta* is concluded. The task may need hours, days, weeks, months, whatever, but the begun *dominanta* must be realized, otherwise there will be no growth in that sphere. Ousting or interrupting it by another *dominanta* causes it to atrophy.

These conditions bring us back to Arshavski: action, rest and stress induce growth and they all rely on strictly self-regulatory mechanisms that signal when to change activities (physical vs intellectual, for example), how much to strain and when the task is complete. If forced to overwork, the *dominanta* exhausts itself and does not have the time to recover and hence dies. At the same time,

⁷Cooperative Association for Workers and Peasants.

if it does not reach its maximum limits of physiological stress, it cannot recharge with surplus anabolism and hence atrophies.

In conclusion on learning and growth, *dominanta* and its realization is a complex process that involves at least social, psychological, physiological elements and probably others that humanity has not yet discovered. The process of *dominanta* can ONLY be a personal endeavour endangered by timetables, bells, disruptions and coercion. This process needs the effort of WILL - it can never be achieved through coercion, punishment, blackmail, or prizes where good and bad grades, scholarships or the retraction of money are efficient tools that act as the negative stress of destruction exerted from the outside.

Rearing and caring for the *dominanta*, according to Arshavski, is the ultimate expression of love. By that he means that respecting one's own and the other's *dominanta* inevitably creates conscientious, creative and respectful creatures and can solve the problem of the increasing social violence, crimes committed against people and nature, and wars.

However, contemporary society is so organized as to maximally destroy the WILL and the *dominanta* creating docile workers and consumers. The medical and educational sectors are the crucial "departments" of this Institution responsible for the transmission and re-enactment of these self-destructive values that transmit and nurture Freud's version of "love" rather than Arshavski's.

Institutionalization of habitus

"Institution" is at the core of the establishment we refer to as education and of the other inter-related social organs. The term "institution", in this essay, designates the social practices that have been organized as the skeletal bone of the social structure. It is more than just a structure though. Institution takes its life first in the belief, the logical and the mostly illogical faith and the feeling of belonging through similarity, routine, and confirmation in actions, experiences, feelings and aspirations that people often see as natural, inevitable, organic. In other words, society itself is Institution.

Second, the institution is realized through specific feelings, attitudes, and acts. It can never be only words or only structure. It needs people to live according to its needs. Through people it acquires its organic aspect.

Finally, the institution (I am talking about the Western capitalist/democratic model – not all institutions are the same) is hierarchical, pyramidal, because the powerful, wealthy, elitist top and the weakened, impoverished massive bottom can thus secure their mutual existence as well as the body and structure of the institution itself through supervision, desires, beliefs, meaning, practice, aspirations, identity, faith.... Hence, authority and values are concrete elements in the functioning of institutions that forge the necessary desires. For, those at the top of the hierarchy need the adherence of those on whom they depend at the bottom of this structure and who are much more numerous. The laws that protect those at the top (invented by their own smart selves) can exist only if those at the

bottom believe in them and adhere to them. Through this collage of organic individuals and their adherences, praxis and faith, the institution attains its totalitarian, hierarchical, independent and organic quality.

Thus, any social institution depends on dogma ("natural" science, religion, philosophy, etc.) to offer "convincing" explanations - particularly to the disinterested parties - as to the natureness of the world and human experience.

"Education" first forms those explanations then educates people appropriately to their social roles, ideally to desire and to "choose" the imposed positions and functions. In fact, I argue that the methods themselves are a curriculum in their own right, inculcating a specific *habitus* through which individuals may continually reproduce their institutions. It is this interdependence of institution and education that makes it tricky and elusive.

In *The Logic of Practice*, Pierre Bourdieu analyzes the inscription of history within the flesh, blood, and the bone marrow of the human being.

"The *habitus* - embodied history, internalized as a second nature and so forgotten as history - is the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product. As such, it is what gives practices their relative autonomy with respect to external determinations of the immediate present. This autonomy is that of the past, enacted and acting, which functioning as accumulated capital, produces history on the basis of history and so ensures the permanence in change that makes the individual agent a world within the world. The *habitus* is a spontaneity without consciousness or will, opposed as much to the mechanical necessity of things without history in mechanistic theories as it is to the reflexive freedom of subjects 'without inertia' in rationalist theories."⁸

⁸Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*.

Bourdeu's *habitus* illuminates the processes that underlie the embodiment or the materialization of history that drives a person to make specific decisions and commit certain actions. In a way it becomes the meaning of human life inscribed in the human being as text; more important, it becomes an inevitable text, despite the fact that often it may seem as original or innovative. The drive that causes a person to commit certain acts or take specific decisions is the same force that prompts a person to extract particular meaning from anything that exists around. In other words, our emotional and intellectual reactions come from a deeper than the conscious level, they come from the forgotten intelligence of the flesh.

"The dialectic of the meaning of the language and the 'sayings of the tribe' is a particular and particularly significant case of the dialectic between *habitus* and institutions, that is, between two modes of objectification of past history, in which there is constantly created a history that inevitably appears, like witticisms, as both original and inevitable"⁹.

Bourdieu links the *habitus* of individualized history to that of the institution because the institution is made up of individual bodies, but at the same time institutions create their individuals and bodies - a kind of predetermined cycle of reproduction:

"to be reproduced in the form of the durable, adjusted dispositions that are the condition of their functioning, the *habitus*, which is constituted in the course of an individual history, imposing its particular logic on incorporation, and through which agents partake of the history objectified in institutions, is what makes it possible to inhabit institutions, to appropriate them practically, and so to keep them in activity, continuously pulling them from the state of dead letters, reviving the sense deposited in them, but at the same time imposing the revisions and transformations that

⁹Ibid.

reactivation entails. Or rather, the *habitus* is what enables the institution to attain full realization: it is through the capacity for incorporation, which exploits the body's readiness to take seriously the performative magic of the social, that the king, the banker or the priest are hereditary monarchy, financial capitalism or the Church made flesh"¹⁰.

The inculcation of *habitus* is thus vital for the life of institutions. However, it is replete with problems and contradictions. For example, if in the animal kingdom the interests of the individual coincide with the interests of the species and, in the words of Arshavski¹¹, animals are conscientious because they follow the laws of nature, the human being has a choice and often makes the choice that disobeys nature at large and the nature of the individual species, often to personal detriment. Examples abound that reveal the conflict between the interests of the institution and its individuals (to which Freud refers as the "destructive instinct"). Because often interests conflict, it is crucial for the institution that its individuals make choices for its advantage regardless of their own needs. This reproduction of the institution takes over the personal through the insemination of the institution's drive that prompts specific reactions, feelings, and what Bourdieu calls *praxis* (the economy of effort) through automatic behaviour that *habitus* makes possible at the irrational, automatic, even bodily level. This drive is not something inherent, genetic, or religious. It is socially instilled physiology. If learnt naturally obeying the conditions outlined by Arshavski, the instilled drive bears the instinct of life and love. If, however, the being develops in a suppressed and oppressed environment, the *habitus* becomes that of hatred and destruction. In

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹In Nikitina, L.A.; *To the Parents of the 21st Century*.

both cases, the socialized individuals continue at all cost to reproduce their institutions.

I will discuss two examples of how people choose the interests of their institutions, even when those work against themselves. The first example is an obvious one, the second, my case study, is much less so.

Predicting the Future

The most profound decisions about justice are not made by individuals as such, but by individuals thinking within and on behalf of institutions¹².

Institutions bestow sameness, they confer identity and reproduce themselves with and through individuals.

Institutions are embodied in individual experience by means of roles. The roles, objectified linguistically, are an essential ingredient of the objectively available world of any society. By playing roles, the individual participates in a social world. By internalizing these roles, the same world becomes subjectively real to him¹³.

This is why, Douglas explains, societies experiencing famine in Africa will always reproduce the social patterns, hierarchies, and roles: everyone knows which group is going to be the first to starve out, yet every member of the society, including the group itself, will accept and re-enact the roles almost to the letter - beginning with the "international development and peace keepers" and ending with the dying out persons and groups themselves. The meaning of such

¹²Douglas, Mary; *How Institutions Think*.

¹³Ibid.

suffering will have little, if any, bearing on how those responsible for the genocide in the "civilized" world continue to behave, and none of the parties (neither those responsible for nor those profiting from the starvation, nor the starving persons themselves) modify their behaviour because the drive will always assign the necessary meaning to their actions and to human suffering regardless of experience or the linguistic meaning of the terms.

Thus, it is possible, even though unpleasant, for the well-off worlders to watch during supper the victims of wars in the Balkan or African or Middle Eastern lands while participating in the consumption of the same products that render such wars necessary: coffee, petroleum products, sugar, coca-cola, or whatever else that makes one life-style depend on the suffering of others, including, or even particularly on those dying on the TV screen - thus, a life-style of satisfaction depending on starvation and vice versa, if you wish.

Of course, this is less obvious when the victim reproduces the institution. Douglas however makes a convincing illustration of how victims of famine re-enact their roles despite the availability of food not only in the world at large, but even in their own land.

Moreover, the depiction of the events of famine, war and death may be extremely verbose - in fact, it has got to be verbose; for, language and verbosity veil the content.

The verbose aspect of contemporary Western society is relevant to our topic precisely because education depends on literacy and verbosity having substituted the natural learning patterns of action and motion (i.e. growth) with inaction and verbal abstraction (i.e. subtraction) - it has substituted learning with teaching, action

with inaction, concrete learning with verbose teaching. In other words, the contemporary method of institutionalization depends on the atrophying of the *dominant*s and on the zombification or the filling in with excessive verbal "information". Again, it is the life forces that are replaced with death producing a verbal flood.

The example of the victimization of the societies that Douglas studied in Africa outlines a pattern where individuals favour their institution even when the institution's interests harm them. We can discern a similar pattern in the West, albeit less obvious because Western "society" thinks of itself as well-off, promoting the myth of the Individual or the Self as something "free" and "independent" of others and the world.

The Industrial habitus of Education

Propaganda of the virtues of industrialization imposes the idea that industrialization has liberated people from work; for, supposedly machines have replaced the personal effort making life easier and more comfortable. In reality, however, people spend more time at work and less time with families than in pre-industrial times, where working people had the time to work, feed the wealthy (land-owners, politicians, government administrators, etc.), raise their own children, the wealthy children, and to transmit culture and knowledge.

Today, people hardly spend time with their families and the family unit in the Western world has reached critical limits of

extinction¹⁴. While people spend their most efficient time locked up at work away from their families, their children are rounded up for forced (obligatory) education in schools. The love and the life that used to be transmitted in the intimacy of family relations between the young and the old are now replaced by professionals and schedules, i.e. by what kills growth, conscience, intelligence and creativity instilling in these children the instinct of death. In North America, full time nurseries accept children as early as 3 months of age.

Although, the compulsory education is until high-school, university is viewed as a prize to be sought after. This "uncompulsory" but highly desired stage in the educational programme is responsible for sorting out the "information" in the already prepared "consumer" (of information too) and reinforces the hierarchy and the methods instilled in pre-university schooling.

The founders of these institutions, according to John Taylor Gatto, a distinguished public school teacher and researcher in education¹⁵, are the military in Europe and the industrial capitalists in the U.S.

"The real makers of modern schooling were leaders of the new American industrial class, men like:

Andrew Carnegie, the steel baron...

John D. Rockefeller, the duke of oil...

Henry Ford, master of the assembly line which compounded steel and oil into a vehicular dynasty...

and J.P. Morgan, the king of capitalist finance..."¹⁶

¹⁴Family Statistics for 2001.

¹⁵Each year from 1989 to 1991 he was named New York City Teacher of the Year. In 1991 the New York Senate named him State Teacher of the Year.

¹⁶Gatto, J.T.; *The Underground History of American Education*.

In *Dumbing Us Down*, Gatto pinpoints the goal of schooling.

"Schools were designed by Horace Mann and by Sears and Harper of the University of Chicago and by Thorndyke of Columbia Teachers College and by some other men to be instruments of the scientific management of a mass population. Schools are intended to produce, through the application of formulas, formulaic human beings whose behaviour can be predicted and controlled..."

A more revealing detail of the nature of contemporary schooling is its historical importation from Europe.

"The structure of American schooling, 20th century style, began in 1806 when Napoleon's amateur soldiers beat the professional soldiers of Prussia at the battle of Jena... Almost immediately afterwards a German philosopher named Fichte delivered his famous "Address to the German Nation" which became one of the most influential documents in modern history. In effect he told the Prussian people that the party was over, that the nation would have to shape up through a new Utopian institution of forced schooling in which everyone would learn to take orders.

So the world got compulsion schooling at the end of a state bayonet for the first time in human history; modern forced schooling started in Prussia in 1819 with a clear vision of what centralized schools could deliver:

1. Obedient soldiers to the army;
2. Obedient workers to the mines;
3. Well subordinated civil servants to government;
4. Well subordinated clerks to industry;
5. Citizens who thought alike about major issues."¹⁷

Needless to say, the institution of army is the institution of death per se. More important, it is the institution of imposed death, of murder. The deadly nature of the structure itself of education is not surprising in light of the above analysis of the physiological nature of learning discussed by Nikitina and Arshavski. In fact, it is its logical link in history. The methods developed in this case respond to the

¹⁷Gatto from: *The Public School Nightmare: Why fix a system designed to destroy Individual Thought*.

need to kill not only the enemy outside, but also the enemy inside, i.e. intelligence and will in order to create obedience, subordination, and what Gatto calls outright "dumbness".

"Old-fashioned dumbness used to be simple ignorance; now it is transformed from ignorance into permanent mathematical categories of relative stupidity like "gifted and talented," "mainstream," "special ed." Categories in which learning is rationed for the good of a system of order...

If you believe nothing can be done for the dumb except kindness, because it's biology (the bell-curve model); if you believe capitalist oppressors have ruined the dumb because they are bad people (the neo-Marxist model); if you believe dumbness reflects depraved moral fiber (the Calvinist model); or that it's nature's way of disqualifying boobies from the reproduction sweepstakes (the Darwinian model); or nature's way of providing someone to clean your toilet (the pragmatic elitist model); or that it's evidence of bad karma (the Buddhist model); if you believe any of the various explanations given for the position of the dumb in the social order we have, then you will be forced to concur that a vast bureaucracy is indeed necessary to address the dumb.

...Mass dumbness first had to be imagined; it isn't real.

Once the dumb are wished into existence, they serve valuable functions: as a danger to themselves and others they have to be watched, classified, disciplined, trained, medicated, sterilized, ghettoized, cajoled, coerced, jailed. To idealists they represent a challenge, reprobates to be made socially useful... An ignorant horde to be schooled one way or another."¹⁸

One of the principle practices in education is therefore the cultivation of dumbness as a norm, the paradox being that dumbness as a negative affliction to be cured and avoided in its semantic rendition and, at the same time in practice, as an obligatory, positive prize to be desired and which is compensated with diplomas and various certificates.

However, if dumbness is the norm in the masses, then intelligence fulfilled becomes a rare occurrence in the realm of genius. Needless

to say, the "genius" usually come from instances where there is the possibility not to stifle the natural passion to learn. If we look at the biographies of those persons deemed as "genius" in Occidental civilization, they have mostly been home-schooled. In the case of Blaise Pascal, we can even apply the new term "unschooled".

More important though, the "genius" usually implies someone at the "service" of the current system. Those who pick out the genius are those for whom the genius is most useful. Anarchists - no matter how genius - are not on the Nobel Prize lists. Those promoting "democracy" are.

There is another category of those who have neither risen to the rare status of genius (and for the obvious reasons rarely anyone does) nor have succumbed to the dumbing and killing methods of schooling. These are the schizophrenics, the manic depressors, and other such lot that "society" attempts to cure and recycle.

My own extensive experience in the various educational systems ranging from nursery to the doctoral level has confirmed the above. Thus, despite the fact that "*Dumbing Us Down*" has been an intense practice in our pre-university education, professors in masters and doctoral level seminars inadvertently and frequently remind students of their place and hierarchy not only within the system but within the classroom itself. During the obligatory seminars on the doctoral level that I attended, professors continuously treated students as lazy, evasive (I'll make you read, you won't escape work, and other such comments) or as stupid and ignorant: you don't know, is it hard for you to understand, do you get it at all, you don't know

¹⁸Gatto. *Dumbing Us Down*.

how to write, you can't even locate your own "*problematique*" in your own head let alone express it on paper, and so forth). Ironically, the argument that "in reality students arrive at this level and still don't know..." serves only to confirm Gatto's "dumbing down" premise.

In "The 7-lesson schoolteacher"¹⁹, Gatto confesses to teaching the following:

1. Confusion: because everything is out of context or is in abstract and imagined context.
2. Class position.
3. Indifference: "when the bell rings... they (students) stop whatever it is that we've been working on and proceed quickly to the next work station... Indeed, the lesson of the bells is that no work is worth finishing, so why care too deeply about anything? Years of bells will condition... to a world that can no longer offer important work to do. Bells are the secret logic of schooltime... Bells destroy the past and future, converting every interval into a sameness, as an abstract map makes every living mountain and river the same even though they are not. Bells inoculate each undertaking with indifference."
4. Emotional dependency: he teaches children to surrender their will to the chain of command, using "stars and red checks, smiles and frowns, prizes, honors and disgraces."
5. Intellectual dependency. The most important lesson. Children must wait for the expert authority to make all the important decisions, to tell them what to study. There is no place for curiosity, only conformity.
6. Provisional self-esteem: Because it is so difficult to make self-confident spirits conform, children must be taught that their self-respect depends on expert opinion. They must be constantly tested, evaluated, judged, graded, and reported on by certified officials. Self-evaluation is irrelevant - "people must be told what they are worth."
7. You can't hide. Children are always watched. No privacy. People can't be trusted.

If Gatto talks about children in schools, the undergraduate or postgraduate university methods are based on the same principles

¹⁹Ibid.

and we can recognize them in grading, "mentoring", "supervising", awards, denial of funding, to list a few examples.

Gatto summarizes the consequences of the seven lessons in the following way:

1. The private Self is almost non-existent; children develop a superficial personality borrowed from TV shows.
2. Desperate dependence.
3. Unease with intimacy or candor; dislike for parents; no real close friends; lust replaces love.
4. Indifference to the adult world; very little curiosity about anything; boredom.
5. A poor sense of the future; consciousness limited to the present.
6. Cruelty to each other.
7. Striking materialism.
8. The expectation to fail; the idea that success has to be stolen.

These conclusions have a remarkable resonance with Arshavski's warnings in the above outlined principles of love and respect for *dominantas*. The instincts of love and life are being murdered in institutions of teaching. This also resonates with Douglas' observation that individuals will re-enact their institutional roles even when these same institutions lead to their own destruction. Like the aliens of Hollywood films, these institutions acquire a life of their own, independent of and concurrently living off their victim's *habitus* and *praxis* - while the victims themselves willfully submit to rearing the Institution rather than their own and their children's *Dominanta*.

The Verdict

Next to the right to life itself, the most fundamental of all human rights is the right to control our own minds and thoughts... Whoever takes that right away from us, by trying to 'educate' us, attacks the very center of our being and does us a most profound and lasting injury. He tells us, in effect, that we cannot be trusted even to think...

Education... Seems to me perhaps the most authoritarian and dangerous of all the social inventions of mankind. It is the deepest foundation of the modern and worldwide slave state... My concern is not to improve 'education' but to do away with it, to end the ugly and antihuman business of people-shaping and to allow and help people to shape themselves."

John Holt from *Instead of Education*

A precursor of Gatto, John Holt observed that we learn best from "doing - self-directed, purposeful, meaningful life and work." He describes school education as "learning cut off from active life and done under pressure of bribe or threat, greed and fear."

There seems to be a parallel between Holt's description of education and of war, colonialism and globalism at the basis of which too lies the drive for bribe, threat, greed, and fear. I define globalism as the colonization of many cultural logics by a dominant one. Needless to say, the cradle of today's globalism is Europe. After all, it is from there that the colonizers of the American Wild West and other territories emerged, efficiently sweeping over and destroying the aboriginal cultures and logics.

As I discussed in this paper, the logic of the Institution re-enacts itself through the *habitus* and *praxis* of individuals regardless of their place in the hierarchy of individual or of ethnic or national groups and regardless of their own personal interests. Daily, we witness the confirmation of conformation to the logic of the Institution when

parents succumb to forced "education" and the educated individuals accept the murder of their *dominanta*.

This conformation is also at the basis of *habitus* in the teacher's *praxis* or the teacher's economy of effort. The teacher exercises this economy in grading where s/he automatically looks for the institution in the work of the student, marking as "right" when s/he finds it and "wrong" when s/he does not. And this is exactly what s/he has been hired to do.

In reality, right and wrong can only be moral judgments (religious or natural) - in terms of correctness, there are infinite possibilities. Hence, when a teacher judges a student's work as right or wrong, grading it according to a scale of rightness, it is not "correctness" that is being looked for, but rather an expression of values, which are not absolute, but battled for and battling. That is why, grades tell more about the one who grades than about the one being graded.

In the final score, the content of what is being said means little - it is the method that creates the result. In this way, a teacher's talking - referred to as lecturing - is not what really affects a person. It is the **fact** of the teacher's talking that confirms the hierarchy and forces the student to conform that has the ultimate result. It is the fact of the constant bells and interruptions that kill the *dominanta*. It is the fact of being coerced into wanting good grades and believing that they in themselves determine the quality of the life that the person is going to live and the quality of the person that the teaching is to produce. It is the outright threat and danger capable of crushing one's future, one's personality and *dominanta* - threats that descend from those who

create the "curriculum" of what we are "obliged" to learn in our obligatory schooling and seminars. What type of *habitus* can such methods instill?

To return to the opening quote from John Holt: Adults don't love their children and school is the institutional confirmation of that fact. What love can we talk about in the context of self-destruction? This crucial and fragile aspect of human life we call Love and its distortion to Death we find at all levels of the educational hierarchy. The institution does not love its children - it needs only to confirm its own logic. Institution needs obedience and it uses all the means and methods available: grades, policing, threatening, buying, all these are only the tools of bullying that educators – wittingly or not, from nursery to doctoral level programmes - use on behalf of the interests of the hierarchy we call Civilization.

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