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CREATIVE-C LEARNING

THE BRAINSMART KINDERGARTEN

Educational Curriculum by Peter Fritz Walter

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THE SYSTEMLITERATE CHILD

I believe that children are systems thinkers by nature. They are keen observers. They want to know how nature operates and how things work.

Their play reflects their mental flexibility and openness to understanding more and more complex interrelations as their intelligence and their emotional awareness matures.

I coined the expression 'systemliteracy' for the framework of an education that is geared toward the understanding of living systems and the functional logic of networks. We know in the meantime what 'ecoliteracy' is but I believe that without having prepared children to be literate in systems thinking, they cannot become literate in ecological thinking. The first is the basis of the latter.

Ecology is not a branch of science but a way to redefine science. All branches of the tree of science should be 'ecological' for this simply means that they are bound to respect nature and to understand the patterned setup in nature.



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—Note that the term ecology comes from the Greek 'oikos' which means 'household.' Ecology thus deals with our household, the household of planet earth.

To see life composed not of separate parts or elements but of organic patterns in a whole—or as systems within systems—is the point of departure of a truly ecological science. There cannot be any 'ecoliteracy' without 'systemliteracy' and logically, I must adopt the systems view of life before I can in any way become to care about our household, our ecology. In other words, ecology is a term coined for the development of holistic science, while systemliteracy is a term coined for the development of holistic education.

To repeat it, I believe that children think systemically by nature; it is by emphasizing an intellect-based educational concept that school systems teach children a largely distorted view of nature in which everything is split apart, fragmented and un-whole (unholy). And this really begins in Kindergarten. Let me only mention the way reading and writing even today is taught to children in public schools, and even most private schools. Letters are put on squared cardboards and hung at a wall.

This and related procedures give children the impression that letters, words, phrases, spelling, and grammar are all separate elements of language, while in truth language is one whole, and these organic elements have been separated from



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the systemic logic of language. This is really not smart because the same children who are in for learning to read and write have after all learnt already to speak without all those tools, simply by picking up the language spoken around them—their mother tongue.

Research about how children learn their first language clearly shows that children do not learn abstract elements of a language, but the whole of it, including syntax and grammar, and without knowing what a syntax is and what grammar means. Hence, the learning of a child is by nature holistic and systemic.

I shall list and review here a number of other important distortions of the natural systemic view of life that our cultural heritage has brought about. It is important to see that this process of fragmentation in science and education has developed not only in the West, but also in the East, while in both cultures the ancient civilizations fostered a holistic and systemic worldview. While the East favored this view longer than the West, today it is easy to observe that the East, in modern times, took over the distorted and fragmented Western approach to life, science and our planet.

—About 2500 years ago, man turned away from the until then valid all-encompassing mystical view of life, and began to intellectualize perception, fragmenting the holistic under-



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standing of the world. This is how the conceptualized and compartmentalized view of the world was born.

—The split of this unity of perception was marked in the Hellenic world with the Eleatic school which assumed a Divine Principle standing above all gods and men. This concept later developed into what perhaps most marked monotheistic religions: the assumption of an all-knowing, overarching, monolithic, male God.

—At the same time, thinking and deductive logic assumed a more important role than intuition and associative logic, thereby giving more value to yang, the male principle, to the detriment of yin, the female principle.

—This inner fragmentation more and more mirrored the view of the world outside, seen as a multitude of separate objects and events. This is how it became at all possible that obvious organic elements in the setup of nature were seen as separate parts to be researched by separate branches of science; at the same time, the world was split into different nations, races, religions and political groups.

—The conceptualization of life developed into a limitative view in all scientific observation of nature. This is how the mental and intellectual representation of reality became more important than reality itself. This is very well expressed by the Zen saying that the finger that points to the Moon is not the Moon. In other words, the distorted perception of reality led



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to a confusion between the terrain and the map that describes it.

—The next step in this ‘processing’ of reality was to develop a mechanistic view of nature, next to a rigorous determinism. The universe was represented as a giant machine or clockwork that was imagined to be completely causal and determinate. This view in turn led to a fundamental division between the Ego or the ‘I’, and the ‘reality out there.’ This further distortion of perception led to the assumption that nature and the world could be described objectively, without the mental bias of the observer playing any significant role.

—Instead of understanding that male and female attributes are elements of the human personality, the division between the Ego and Nature led to a static order where men were supposed to be masculine and women feminine. By the same vein of thought, men were given the leading role and women were supposed to follow as submissive servants. This attitude has resulted in an overemphasis of the yang aspects in the human setup, such as activity, rational thinking, deductive logic, competition, aggressiveness, and so on, while the yin, or female, modes of consciousness, which can be described by words like intuitive, religious, mystical, intuitive, occult, psychic or associative logic, have constantly been suppressed.



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Over the last decades, this distorted scientific and religious view of the world, of nature and the human setup, which is reflected in our highly fragmented curricula, began to change. With the advent of first relativity theory and then quantum physics, we learnt that all in the universe is connected, and that we can change our fragmented worldview and adopt an integrative view of life and nature. The rigorous split between 'reality' and the 'ego' was seen as incompatible with the truth, delivered by quantum physics, that nothing can be observed without taking into consideration the 'observer.'

In other words, when I observe a living system, my observation of that system can be as elegant as my technology is, but even when my observation is sophisticated, there is a definite and finite frontier: my observation will disturb the system, whatever I do.

When you teach children that we are separated from nature, however you justify such a view, you will act against the natural and intuitive understanding a child has of life and the world. For a child, nothing is separate because children have (hopefully) not yet been conditioned to the mainstream view of a 'processed' reality. They look at the world afresh, with eyes full of wonder. For small children, the divisive, fragmented and distorted view that observes living systems like one would dismantle a clock, is not intelligible.



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Therefore, it is actually not so much by doing anything specific, but rather by not doing many things conventional education does that we develop in children the systems view of life, or 'the systemliterate perspective.' This teaching is first of all based on an innocent observation of nature and our planet seen as one whole living system. The second step is to explain to children that the living world consists of nested networks, living systems that are embedded within greater systems and still greater systems, and that there is a flow of total information between all those systems. Computer graphics can powerfully bridge the gap between what can be seen with the naked eye and what cannot be seen. For example, the information flow within living systems cannot be seen, but it can be measured and those graphical details can be shown to even small children when the activity is functional and connected to the actual observation of a system. Even small children do understand that there are things so microscopic that they cannot be seen with the naked eye. With the aid of a loupe and a basic student microscope, it is easy to show to children that there is an abundance of living matter to be seen on a level that is not accessible to the naked eye.

THE SANE CHILD

The present book is written for parents and educators with the purpose to show alternatives for behavior, for indi-



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vidual and cultural choices, and for a better education of our children.

I shall be asking what was first, the hen or the egg, the sane child or the insane adult? And it's not difficult to intuit the answer. The sane child is the natural child; and as nature is infinitely rejuvenating herself over the generations, the sane child is as it were a recurring feature in the biological setup of human society.

And it is equally true that an ever new generation of sane children is perverted into an ever new generation of insane adults through institutionalized and standardized education that educates not along the lines of nature, but along the fault lines of culture, and of tradition. When nature is not bent in its bioenergetic essence, matter remains infinitely supple, and flexible.

Children who grow without a moralistic roof structure as a consciousness overlay move swiftly, and are agile, witty and competent. Their breath is fresh and perfumed, the breath of life.

The sane child is the child that has not been twisted into dualism, the cultural split between emotions, on one hand, and intellect, on the other. Life is a whole, a unity, and the natural child lives in that original undivided state of being, and not in the state of consume-trained innocence that is a signal for a mutilated emotional setup. Emotional balance is a



state of inner peace, which is the natural result of emotional wholeness.

The sane educational approach is functional, not moralistic. The sane educator is able to maintain a healthy balance between emotions and intellect.

He or she will be an observer rather than a manager, a witness rather than a judge, a friend rather than a parent replacement. He accompanies the child, as a guide, as a tutor.

The vibrant natural child assumes characteristics that are rather contrary to what is generally considered to be normal in our days. This must be so because the standards set for the education of our children are not child-oriented, but industry-oriented. They serve consumer culture first of all, and the child, if ever, only in second instance; they are intended to serve technological progress and therefore are forged for bringing up the consumer child. As a result, the natural child sadly is blacklisted because by nature a bad consumer. Natural children don't need medication against hyperactivity, the cultural disease of the consumer child; they sleep in a trance-like state that is so deep that you can throw them in the air or carry them around on your shoulder, yet they won't wake up. In addition, they heal themselves from most of their illnesses, and this without doctors and pharmaceuticals. Their body possesses a naturally strong immunitary response with the re-



sult that they do not catch all those diseases consumer children today are suffering from.

They are alert and witty, and agile. Their bodies are gracious and well-proportioned; they move swiftly instead of being clumsy and fat like consumer children. They are naturally respectful instead of constantly molesting others.

And they can be silent and non-obtrusive when they have to, instead of behaving like drunken princes or perverted freaks, the way, namely, most consumer children today behave.

Natural children live out the whole range of their emotions, including their sensuality, in a way that is naturally balanced. Our distorted and sexualized concept of love is unknown to natural children because it is schizoid and erects an unnatural residual view of life; such a notion of perceiving life is alien to the unfragmented mind of natural children. That is why we have to preserve the natural child, and thus, as a paradigmatic quest arising from that insight, safeguard our sane children from repression, corruption and indoctrination.

For natural children, the body plays a most important role in their self-expression, and primarily in sharing and expressing affection, love, and tenderness. To the natural child, it feels normal to be sensual as a code inherent in spontaneous self-expression.



But sensuality is not a conditioned response; it comes with birth, a natural outflow of sensation. More we sense, more we are alive, more we are sensual! That is why children are highly sensual by nature, and only by repression and denial coming on down in the black mask of education are they gradually rendered non-sensual, dull and alienated from their bodies.

Even as adults, we can experience the blessed condition called a child-like mood or innocence, which is actually a sacred state of being.

In moments when we feel truly excited and trust another human, we are in a state of sacred unity. It's a religious state of mind, and the natural condition of the sane, non-conditioned child.

This state of mind must imperatively be preserved by education and not, as in traditional upbringing, be sacrificed to values such as discipline, rationality, toughness, or any other of the split concepts so typical for our deeply fragmented culture.

It is for this reason that I call integrated education a 'love education' and shall further down explicit the details of such a sane educational concept. It's sane because it's safeguarding and protecting the natural child by loving care, for preserving that blessed state of non-conditioned spontaneity and natural emotional intelligence that is the fruit of nature—and not of



culture. Hence, love education abstains from conditioning the child according to social ideals that mutilate the natural integrity and wholeness of the newborn.

Institutional education does not serve the child, but the system; it does not recognize the existence of individual, and individually gifted children. For mass education, there is a quantity of humans to be educated, not a variety of unique individuals. This is why mass education is destructive and leads to devolution, not to evolution. It serves not cultural, but if ever, military needs. It destroys the full human in us. It suffocates sensitivity and sensuality, and wipes out individual differences by imposing certain behavior patterns, with the ultimate purpose of molding children into a standard pattern of thinking and acting that is socially approved and politically correct. It conditions good humans to become bad citizens and dull bureaucrats. It paralyzes the inborn self-thinker and replaces individual intelligence and brilliance by mass mediocrity.

The traditional patriarchal educational paradigm creates havoc in the child's psyche by stressing performance and ruthless competition, thereby creating violence in relationships. It transforms the naturally self-thinking child into a conforming robot that fits like a wheel in a machinery of inhuman values that make up our mainstream cultural paradigm. Even in schools for children from well-to-do families, the child is often



not respected as an integrated human, but reduced to a split-self that is conditioned to become a cunning career-hawk; by doing so, the unique soul qualities of the child are neglected or downplayed, if not shunned, and through the outright focus on left-brain, separative yang values, the more integrative and socially functional yin values are wiped under the carpet. This is how, virtually in the cradle and the crèche, hubris and violence are structurally programmed by modern society into our young generations.

A further result of this educational bias is that systemic, associative, creative and ecological thinking is mutilated and so-called rational, logical, strategic thinking is hypertrophied.

To focus on every individual child is only possible when, from the start, we have a qualitative and not a quantitative approach to education. The quality approach does not ask for efficiency, but for integrated solutions that serve every child in the community.

We cannot compartmentalize education or we bring about humans who suffer from a fragmented perception. Direct or unfragmented perception typically leads to peaceful interaction with others and the environment, and as such it fosters nonviolent behaviors.

Life education opposes moralistic education because morality-based education serves dominator culture, and not the child. Dogma-based education molds the child after the



adult role model as a social ideal, and thus after the values valid for a majority. Such forms of education regularly disregard the true needs of the child or sacrifice them on the altar of mighty, idealized, parenthood. Carl Jung used to say that our psychiatric cabinets are filled with people who had 'ideal parents.' Bruno Bettelheim coined this truth into the dictum that parents should be 'good enough' instead of being perfect.

Moralistic education is contrary to intelligence for it breeds psychological fear and guilt which are barriers to self-knowledge. True intelligence is nourished by observing our psycho-emotional actions and reactions on a regular basis.

The adherence to morality or ideological positions hinders the birth of true intelligence because it blocks the dialogue with our desires and inner energies.

Education based upon ideologies leads to negative growth, absolute rigid positions, conformity, imitation and, in last resort, violence. For getting an idea of the emotional life of the child, we need to grasp what is intelligence. Many people confuse intelligence with knowledge; they don't see that accumulation of knowledge is purely mechanical and as such no indicator of intelligence. Intelligence is something entirely different from knowledge. It is not mechanical, but a natural byproduct of emotional vivacity and wholeness: to grow sanely means to be rather intuitive. Children and gen-



issues have that in common that they are emotionally integrated.

Our rational mind only functions at full capacity when it is connected to our irrational mind so that intellectual/analytic and intuitive/synthetic thought synergistically interact with each other. In that case, the rational and the emotional part of us are well balanced and we experience a state of lasting inner peace.

Mainstream education makes a complex and difficult natural process easy by destroying it. It kills the child emotionally by invalidating the child's right-brain capacities and resulting actions and, as a matter of fact, castrating the child emotionally at an early age. The world is populated with people who are emotionally dead.

Mainstream education reminds of a gardener who, because of lacking knowledge how to grow a certain plant, just roots it out. Junk child! Life education does not produce and does not need junk children as mainstream education does. Junk children are the reminder of civilization. That's exactly what they do, then: they remind us of our incapacity to educate them properly.

By contrast, an integrative educational concept develops wholeness for all children by empathetically and holistically understanding children. The natural counterpart of wholeness is holistic thinking. Intelligence, sensitivity and un-



Understanding for the complex functions of life can only be developed if cognition is imbedded in the emotional life of the person and thus a result of wholeness, and not of fragmentation.

Cognitive capacities that are imbedded in emotional sanity can only grow on a basis of readiness, of emotional maturity. A child voluntarily accepts instruction in reading and writing once emotionally ready for it and not under any other circumstance. And here I speak about the individual maturity of a child, and not a standard concept, since there simply are no standards.

Education must logically proceed in a one-to-one relation and interaction between educator and child, for only then the uniqueness of the child can be validated. The emotional bond in this relation is of overwhelming importance.

Only love can be the bridge for the transmission of values. Group education therefore is an impossible quest. It seems to be more effective while truly it is much less since the child, in a group, is treated at a bottomline level and not according to their emotional and intellectual complexity. In addition, tactile stimulation is of high importance, especially for smaller children because it enhances the emotional flow and by doing so strengthens the child's immunitary system.

In a time of manifold immunity-related diseases, we should begin to appreciate the preventive benefits of tactile



stimulation and consider to incorporate child massage in our educational curricula.

—See, for example, Frederick Leboyer, *Loving Hands* (1977)

The integrative approach to education also stresses that education should be down-to-earth if it is to avoid an ‘ivory tower’ intellectualism as a result. In olden times this was called ‘education of the heart.’ You find it for example in the Islamic Sufi tradition or in the Japanese Zen tradition. It is also part of esoteric Christian teachings such as the mystical teaching of Master Eckhart in Germany.

This is being done through giving spirit to daily activities, and to fulfill them not as ordinary duties but enchanted duties which serve to bring order and sobriety not just to the environment, but to the beholder, the soul.

This does not mean that education should be a ‘religious’ one in the sense that it judges materialistic values in any way. Material values, in my view, should be embraced as all of life, material comfort, material safety, material possessions are not in the way when the spirit is pure, and an enslavement to material possessions will then not result. The art of life is not to reject anything but to integrate all of living, also technology, comfort, and possessions of all sorts.



Massage helps greatly here because it overcomes language barriers. What also helps in sometimes miraculous ways is truthful dialogue, the simple practice of putting words on feelings, emotions, and circumstances.

Until children have built a considerable amount of trust toward adults, it is very difficult to communicate loving feelings and acceptance to them verbally. It has to be done physically. When the body talks, no lies are possible. When you touch a child, how you touch will be decisive for your communication with the child. Touch can be degrading, and it can be uplifting; tact and sensitivity are needed here, and also some knowledge about the etiology of the child's particular hangup or emotional distortion—if there is any. With many hyperactive children, the basic problem is a mix of lacking touch and false and religiously tinted language. Hypocrisy as it is practiced still today in fundamentalist churches and sects, and social circles that are politically on the right wing really distorts children's perception and deeply confuses their natural emotional balance.

But children from the opposite side of the political spectrum, the left-wing intelligentsia, are often not better off. Children who come from an atheist background and have overly intellectual parents who reason everything out without the slightest hint of an emotion, always emphasizing the logic and practicability of things, are starving emotionally and sen-



sually. After all, human beings, when in growth, are first of all longing for sensation, and only thereafter, and when their sensual needs are fulfilled, do they agree for being initiated into logic and reason.

Language is not verbal. Verbal communication is a result of culture. Natural language, as Gregory Bateson and other systems thinkers have shown, is touch, telepathy, and emotion. Bateson writes in *Steps to an Ecology of Mind* (1972/2000) that when a kitten wants to communicate that it wants to drink milk, it says: 'Dependency, dependency!'

Further, he writes that the cat talks in terms of patterns and contingencies of relationship, and from this talk it is up to us to take a deductive step, guessing that it is milk that the cat wants. You can a thousand times affirm you love a child, but the child will not really understand what you are talking about. The notion of 'love' has no meaning if the child has no context to put it into, and no experiences that by their contextual pattern convey to the child what love is all about. In addition, when you are negative in your thoughts and feelings about the child, while telling the child that you love him or her, the child will focus not on your words, but on your thoughts and your feelings.

You cannot lie to a child, while you may be able to lie to adults. When I say child, here, I mean a human until the age of six.



Modern society is child-centered in that it has developed a certain protectiveness which is, well understood, a concern for our own future. The modern concept of child protection is a direct result of this concern. But we must also see that such protectiveness may well serve as a pretext for control and terror, and less democracy for the generations to come.

Historically and psychologically, it can be seen that the hidden face of protectiveness is slavery. The rose-and-blue world of modern civilization babies represents the plastic shell in which they are incarcerated for their own good and the clean façade of a culture that has lost the sense of birth and death and, as such, of living. The 'truth of childhood' that child protectors tend to invoke authoritatively to justify their paranoid assumptions is in fact a very relative concept; among one hundred fifty cultures in a survey, ours showed to be one of the three most restrictive. Thus, seen from a global perspective, such kind of statements are not only relative: they are simply invalid as to their pretended universality.

Emotional abuse has been assessed by child psychologists as damaging for the child's healthy emotional development because it entangles the child in a net of obligations, and brings about a submission of the child under the power of the tutelary adult for the exclusive gratification of the adult's desire.



Emotional abuse is much more subtle and underlying as a pattern than other forms of child abuse that have been known for much longer. It is therefore not surprising that research on emotional abuse is relatively recent. And it's so devastating because the child cannot see any valid argument to deny the symbiotoholic demands from the side of parents and educators because these demands are backed up by society that came to use children as sentimental pets in a wide range of areas, and as amuse-jesters and welcome pain-killers, sorrow sponges and night pillows.

A factor for trauma is the child's guilt feelings that result from their (correct) intuition that the symbiotically demanding tutelary adult or educator suffer from some kind of emotional hangup or long-standing inner wound, and that, therefore, to reject persecutory attitudes would mean to put the finger on that wound. Giving the child emotional autonomy clearly means to empower the child, but for many parents it means to have a huge slice of their own abusive parental power removed! And that's why society does not move in that direction. Protectiveness serves consumer culture in that it ensures the child to be available as the cheapest and most willing cutie slave and dummy partner you can think of. While sane children are early independent, outgoing, responsible and self-reliant!



They don't cling to their parents, and thus grow naturally out from the maternal shell.

As parents, tutelary adults and educators, we have to practice non-interference in the child's emotional and intimate life instead of perpetuating persecution and control.

Strangely, while people agree that persecution and control are undemocratic measures, many nonetheless practice them with their own children, unaware that in doing so they help perpetuate archaic and destructive forms of control that impede humanity from progressing into a new age of peace and enlightenment.

LOVE, NEEDS, AND TRUST

I believe times have come to an end when we still gave our children a truly loving education. Most passionate educators today would probably regret the fact that throughout human history, children were disciplined violently and subjected to religious and ideological manipulation.

The greatest danger in our highly sophisticated technological societies is in my view that children are fed with a 'standard' soup of knowledge, a standard mix that is considered 'good for all,' and that accordingly the need for an individualized education is still overlooked or brushed from the



political agenda as an 'unnecessary expense.' In addition, educators who are working in a highly mechanized educational system cannot develop their true passion and their highest potential of 'intelligent play' that makes them to be good educators, capable to transmit knowledge in a way that is ideally 'prepared' for the child to absorb it, because it is adapted to the child's level of comprehension, and imbedded in a playful setting. The uniqueness of this educational approach is that the information, while it's being given to the child in a special way, is not distorted, and thus the child is not manipulated.

The wisdom of the great educator is to somehow mold the information for the level of comprehension of the child, and only genius can do this, educational genius; it needs strong intuition to know what the individual child can manage to receive, and what is not yet in reach. Accordingly, the talented educator is constantly 'managing information,' and adapting education for the needs of the children he or she cares for; this is a very tiring business that only one is ready to do who has the real passion for education.

But this passion is quickly cooled down in a sterile system of education that is mechanical and repetitive, and where the teacher's creative space is curtailed down to a tiny residual spot. This is why standard education, in the long run, destroys both the child and the educator.



We learnt from the 'hippie' experiments of the 1960s and 70s that it's not very intelligent either to fall in the other extreme and to transform a child into an egocentric savage who has no respect for others and no inner culture. We had to understand that education also means showing the limits, for there is no society on earth without limits, and there cannot be in any society individuals who totally disrespect limits. So we have to educate children carefully, and without being violent, to respect limits, wherever this is reasonable and necessary. Doing this is an art, and no ideology or religion can ever help to learn this art; it needs strong intuition, and inner culture; it needs a passionate educator who is dedicated to his or her task and who truly walks his talk.

Besides, it requires high communication ability, for without communication there is no education. Which means that communication between educator and child must be unobstructed and open, and trust has to be built, first of all. Trust is often built by educator and child bonding in a way to form a sort of 'playful complicity' which works very well in practice, while the time for building this inner space of restful confidence differs from one child to the other, and actually depends on many factors.

This complicity is affectional first of all, a form of privacy, a space that is inviolable by the outside world, and that is the basis of a friendship. Friendship may be built, and is ideally



built in the educator-child relation, but it's not a must nor a necessity. But for education to be possible on any level, a basic trust relation must be built, and while the child gives signals how and in which ways to be 'accessible,' it's the educator who is responsible for trustbuilding to succeed. It needs human skills and also simplicity; the more dispassionate you approach children, the better for the trustbuilding process.

The more you try to trap children in bonding that you direct by willfulness and all your 'knowledge' about child psychology, the less you will be able to build even a basic level of trust with the children you want to care for. I have observed this often in child care centers and schools where I have worked; educators who have this pushy approach are often rejected by children, while this reject is not outspoken of course; but these relations are regularly not deep and rather hypocrite and when there is a crisis, the child quickly retreats in their inner world and becomes 'inaccessible.'

This is the fate, then, these educators cash in by their pushy unreasonable attitude, and they are often the ones who have studied a lot and think they know all the rules of the game. The pushy authoritarian approach doesn't work even halfway with intelligent children, and it works even less with problem children, or retarded children, because the latter are very sensitive to the inner motivations of the educator.



Why are the physical needs of the small child more important to be cared for than the child's intellectual and spiritual needs? In present postmodern society, as it develops toward an era of mechanism, robotism and automation, it's as if the child's body had been sacrificed on the cross of technology, which is strangely equated, by ignorant minds, with social progress.

Most religions are body-hostile ideologies that are assisted by the police state; this is how they jointly gave birth to the 'social machine' that only functions on a mere technological level and that is unable to integrate in its residual life concept the most fundamental needs of humans big or small. Yet the human being, contrary to what the positivistic social philosopher La Mettrie believed, is not a clockwork.

Mechanistic thinking, as it's inherent in a technological culture, was for the first time eroded in the 1960s and 70s; many of the social experiments conducted during that time of 'alternative living' and the rise of the counterculture were set to be holistic; a different social paradigm was formulated, one that is integrated, and connected to mother earth, and that was inspired by the wisdom of native peoples around the world.

The child was no more considered a dwarf adult but a unique individual who, though small and inexperienced, possesses an innate and often surprising wisdom which manifests



spontaneously in an ambience where the child receives loving care and attention.

However, the new trend did not last, and there were perhaps too many extreme approaches that were not durable; generally speaking, the passion for a new education, while it was a media runner for a decade or so, was not taking roots and today is to be found, in print, on the bookshelves of university libraries, with few exceptions such as Summerhill that has survived its creator.

And yet, we cannot say that these efforts were wasted; they were precious, to be true, and the reason they are for the most part forgotten today isn't because they did it all wrong, but is due to the political climate. I would even go as far as saying that these experiments contained the seed for a new world, a more peaceful and permissive society; these ideas were not illusions but for the most part inspired by a great vision.

Their fate to be met with resistance was logical after all when we consider that human evolution spirals upwards and doesn't proceed in a linear fashion. So these expansive movements, as a matter of cosmic law, had to meet with political resistance, and thus the rudder turned in the opposite direction, heading toward more conservatism, more restoration of the old and traditional, and more restrictions.



It is undoubtedly difficult to give a sane education to children in this climate of fear, persecution and public hysteria, where you are spied out virtually at every corner of the street, where potentially your emails are read by government agencies and where at work places that deal with children, you are screened more carefully than a secret intelligence agent.

Despite the extreme solutions that were promoted during the time of the Hippie movement in the 1960s and 70s, these experiments with family, open life style, and multiple parenting as in the old extended family. In addition, in the communes of the 1970s, the physical punishment of children was banned, and children were talked to, instead of talked about, and child-rearing was for one time a matter of intelligent choice. What psychologists and sociologists found with these children was that they were not pervaded by the hatred they found in homo normalis, but loving and caring, with a high level of self-assurance and competence. They were found to have high self-esteem, at a higher percentage than average in our culture.

If we want to understand the modern consumer child, we must first of all understand their body. A child who lives in a body that is locked on the muscular level will inevitably suffer from neurosis, insomnia, anxiety and bedwetting, as well as dietary disorders such as bulimia or anorexia. If in such a



case traditional educational measures are taken, which typically focus on the mind of the child, and not their body, the symptoms will aggravate and the situation will worsen. The traditional approach actually mechanizes the child's spirit and splits it off from the soul. The result is the obedient and polite puppet that we know as the model type of traditional education.

The only way to protect the child's creative life is to educate children in full knowledge of their creative drive, which means in full awareness of the child's emotional identity, and by helping the child to develop and cultivate their emotional intelligence.

Spiritual maturity cannot be attained on the basis of thwarted emotions. It needs emotional vivacity. An education that is set out to avoid extremes must combine the sensual dimension with a systematic mental and spiritual awakening of the child, and in addition teach the many details of daily life through a focus on attentiveness.

This should be done without attachment to any specific culture, but in a pragmatic spirit, without cutting the bonds the child maintains with their culture or their religious belonging.

Education can be seen as a prolongation of conception and pregnancy; it's an organic process that is reflected both inside educator and child. There are changes effected and a



growth process triggered both in the child and the educator, when the educational relation really is a love story.

The desire to educate motivates the passionate educator to take care of the child with all the deprivations that this entails, because it is generally badly paid and requires countless unpaid hours, and a sustained effort that often is barely validated, and often not even noticed by the parents of the child.

We all know those men and women who really have no interest for children; they are all very busy with their computers, their racing cars, their airplanes and boats, their expensive travels, and their taste for luxury. They regularly experience little interest for working in educational professions, and even less, for working in early childcare.

An educator who wants to understand the child must first of all understand himself or herself. Accordingly, an educator who wishes to understand the child's desire to be educated should meditate about his or her own desire to educate. The secret is that these desires correspond to each other in that they depend on one another. This means that educators have to render conscious their motivations for educating children, for if they don't, their motivations will remain unreflected upon and can as a result lead their own life; repressed desires easily get out of hand, and they can turn vio-



lent because the energy polarity contained in the desire will change from positive to negative.

Hiding the motivations of our actions only creates guilt and fear, and is not conducive to educating a child responsibly. In addition, educators who do not want to develop emotional awareness will have more difficulty in adopting and respect the rules of the sane educational setting.

We all need professional training, whatever we are doing, and somehow, our society doesn't think of educators needing an awareness building for handling their emotions. Such an awareness building is essential for the educator to become a true companion of the child, in the sense of a mentor and friend, who is not emotionally manipulatory.

I have seen in many schools that educators, without really being conscious of it, act out their primal scene with the children they care for, in the sense that they project all possible and impossible childhood hangups upon them; with the result of course that the relationship becomes pervaded with toxic shame, and ambiguous feelings and messages.

Then, when the dead end is reached, the educator usually collapses and either drops out into another job, or starts a psychotherapy.

However, educators who understand their body sensations, and are familiar with them will be able to effectively ac-



company the child in what is the most essential in the child's life: their feelings, their desires and their most fundamental wish to love and be loved. Only educators who truly know themselves will be able to get on this track without either being bewildered by the complexity of the task, or tempted to act out their own sensual longings for the detriment of the child.

Getting to know oneself through developing innate creativity is only one of several realms of genuine experience the child grows up into, and becomes familiar with over time, without bothering for the least if, or not, the parents want it, know it, or support it. What the child learns first of all through artistic creation is the dimension and the importance of ecstasy in life, and ecstasy in turn is leading to the awakening of enthusiasm, which, as we know from art research, is a primary trigger of long-term creativity.

—See, for example, Michelle Cassou, *Life, Paint and Passion* (1996), Andrew Flack, *Art & Soul* (1991), Pam Grout, *Art & Soul* (2000), Shaun McNiff, *Trust The Process* (1998), Tony Pearce Myers (Ed.), *The Soul of Creativity* (1999)

Enthusiasm develops in the life of the child as a function of ecstasy on a daily level, and ecstasy is nourished by the very gradual and expansive process of self-knowledge.

The acquisition of self-knowledge should be gradual, not sudden, for if the educator tries to hurry this process in



the child, this could lead to a rupture in the child's natural continuum, and then things may get messed up and entangled on the level of the unconscious. The ideal is the gradual, smooth unfolding of experiencing the world, and generally pleasurable feelings, in the life of the child. These sensations of pleasure contribute to the awakening of ecstasy when there is enough latitude in the educational atmosphere for the child to learn that enthusiasm and abundance are natural expansions of the self and should not create guilt and shame. When that happens, a sexual education, as it's done today in schools, really is not needed, and may even have counterproductive effects. Intellectualizing body sensations does not lead to consciousness but to self-consciousness.

With the process of gradual awakening and the daily experience of ecstasy through the encounter with art, children grow their cognitive apparatus because the sensing and feeling, and thereby direct cognition, is greatly enhanced through the natural streaming of their emotions, for emotions are but the life force itself. There is a sense of connectivity that goes along with becoming an early creator; it's a feeling of expansion and embrace, a warm loving feeling toward the world. It is really the most positive experience a child can make when growing up, but it needs to be imbedded in a space of personal and artistic freedom that is respected by parents and educators. This means also that educators give warmth, em-



pathy and understanding, and that they painstakingly avoid manipulation, educational violence and abuse.

Enthusiasm then develops naturally, and is shared with the educator who, in turn, gets a pro-life boost from being around enthusiastic children; it's simply a mutually enriching process, and ideally it's shared also with the parents. This is then, what we call joy of life, and joy of life always is more abundant when it's shared with others. This feeling of abundance, of plentifulness, is very important for the child, for it contributes to material wealth later on in life; there is about no other sensation as important for material success than experiencing abundance early in life. For this to happen, no expensive toys are needed nor do the parents need to be rich themselves; it's enough to grant the child their personal space and their time for developing an authentic sense of self; then the joyful experience of abundance will develop naturally in the life of the child.

Let me comment on the notion of sharing here more in detail. I am convinced that parents and educators should communicate for harmonizing their educational approach. I have seen in several schools that educators were defending a paradigm of parental non-involvement in their educational strategies. I have observed how this works in practice and saw it's not for the best of the child. Such an approach leads sooner or later to an unspoken or open hostility between par-



ents and educators, and results in the child being exposed to contradictory educational approaches, which only creates confusion in the child's mind. This approach is thus counter-productive to securing the child's emotional security because it cuts the natural sharing between parents and educators, and deprives them of an essentially positive and rewarding exchange. Besides, the example shows that dogmatic approaches, or black-or-white approaches really do not work in matters of education, and that the middle way is always best. There is no way around communication; whosoever thinks that in matters of education, they could do away with communication is mistaken and will not be a good parent or educator. Children are naturally communicative; if they aren't, something has happened to them emotionally, or they grew up in an uncommunicative, mute family—which sadly usually is a violent family. Natural children are communicative, and they ask for communicative parents and educators, not only in their own relations with them, but also with regard to the relation parent-educator.

I have observed over the years that when the parent-teacher communication is good and constant, children tend to feel at ease in their school or kindergarten, and easily build trust. Furthermore, in any kind of crisis situation, this communication flow really pays a dividend!



Another element in the educational continuum is gratitude; an educator who is rewarded by an intact emotional flow with both the children and their parents develops a natural feeling of gratitude.

This is something miraculous to observe, as gratitude is really an expansive feeling, which develops, when constant, into an attitude that embraces the world and others.

Gratitude therefore is stronger than compassion, for it gives freedom to others, while embracing them in a non-judgmental way that does not create dependency. This is very important in the relationship educator-child; the good educator is able to avoid the bond of complicity slipping into codependence because that is about the worst to happen in tutelary relations, and generally is the soil for abuse.

Besides, the child will of course sense this feeling of gratitude from the side of the educator, while they regularly do not talk about their perception. In this context, it is important to realize that it is dysfunctional to admonish children to be grateful; what this leads to is that the later adolescent will be an ungrateful nerd.

Gratitude cannot be rammed into children; it cannot be forced, it cannot be pushed to unfold. The only thing to do is to be grateful oneself, parent or educator, for children to 'learn' being grateful, because they sense how good it feels, and how expansive and wonderful that feeling is. In general,



children hardly ever speak about these things, and the wise educator will not push them into verbalizing psychological realities.

It has to be seen that children, because of their natural lack of academic knowledge, easily feel guilty or even inferior when they realize that their knowledge about human psychology is not up to the one the educator has at their disposition. That is why pushing children to 'learn' psychological realities is really the wrong approach and only will result in children becoming more and more mute.

Also, children may resent the educator having a 'police mentality' that tries to get into their secret corner, to spy out their inner mind, and to know their secret thoughts. Such an attitude must be avoided cost what it will, or trustbuilding between educator and children will be greatly impaired. In my observation, educators have this problem who have studied several majors, not just early child care, but also child psychology or child psychotherapy, and who, then, in their daily work with children try to 'unpack' a part of their knowledge for getting a bonus from the side of the direction of the school or kindergarten.

They may get that bonus, but they get it on the back of the children, who will not be served by such an attitude!

Enthusiasm develops through sharing; it can be sharing in a game, or educational activity, or it can be the activity of



sharing as such, without more. Sharing is a wonderful thing to unfold between people, and for children, it's one of the most important things to learn early in life.

I have observed with children from high-class families most often that their natural ability for sharing was interfered with by their parents. These children are often blocked in their emotions, because their sharing abilities are undeveloped. They are awkward and clumsy in sharing activities, and this because of the hyper-egoistic attitudes they have internalized at home. To be true, the ability to share is one of the greatest gifts we have received as human beings. Sharing brings a direct feedback from the universe, a hot streaming that fills the heart, and that expands the thorax, and the mind.

People stuck in egotism can be pitied because they live only half; they are unhappy and often they have simply not learnt the gift of sharing in childhood; this may not have been their fault. It is not excluded that even the hardest egoist may change one day, after a spontaneous act of sharing, and the unknown feelings they learn through the experience.

I think sharing is a visceral need for humans and when it's thwarted, psychic pathologies are not far to occur. This may sound idealistic, but I am not talking here about a social ideal but something as natural as breathing and sleeping. We are all egoists through ignorance, and only through ignorance,



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the ignorance of real joy, which always is connected with sharing!

A wise educator will never talk about virtue, and will not push the child to share, for he knows that this will render the child hypocrite.

The only way to teach sharing is to share, and to do it as a natural movement, spontaneously; then the child will adopt that faculty, through observation.

BODY, MIND, EMOTIONS, AND MUSIC

When the child's body is naturally supple and relaxed, their learning ability runs at maximum speed.

Muscular spasms are somatizations of mental or emotional blockages; they betray psychic tension, or a psychic complex.

This is why children always profit from massage and soft sports such as swimming or table tennis, while hard sports such as football, boxing or tennis actually are counterproductive in that they raise and stock up bodily tension and can in the extreme case lead to mental retardation or psychosomatic ailments. In my honest view, hard sports have to be completely avoided in consciousness-based education.



In the natural condition, body, mind and emotions are swinging together creatively, and they feedback each other; they also are in a state of natural harmony, which means they are balancing each other. When the body is supple, the mind is flexible and open, and emotions are flowing and peaceful; when the body is hard, when there are muscular spasms, the mind is not open for learning, and the child displays symptoms of learning handicap; emotions, then, tend to be sudden, and unpredictable, often out of context, and difficult to handle.

When nature is not interfered with, children have a supple body, an open mind, learn easily and joyfully, and are very balanced emotionally. The hateful child is closed-minded and lives in a hard inflexible body that was tightened up by shock and fear, and often also early trauma and abuse. It is therefore indispensable to help children maintain the natural suppleness of their bodies and give them often the opportunity for relaxation, first of all through sufficient and deep sleep, and second through a spaced learning method that builds in psychosomatic activities such as massage, sauna, jacuzzi, or swimming in open air.

Nudity also plays an important role in keeping the body supple because nudity prevents psychic defenses, or emotional shields, from building up and nesting themselves in body and mind. It needs trust to present oneself nude to oth-



ers, for we are more vulnerable when being nude, and naturally defenseless; and this is a very good trigger for learning because all psychic defenses are countering easy learning. That is why nudity forms part of all non-authoritarian educational approaches, not because it's a fancy or a fashion of the day. It has manifest psychosomatic reasons.

The collective fear in conservative circles that defends children from being nude, especially when in a group, and even more so when girls and boys are mixed, starts from the idea that nudity will quite automatically lead to sexual play. But this assumption, while it's very widespread, is wrong. It is the result of a split conditioning that assumes that all natural nudity and touch is somehow 'sexual,' but it isn't.

For natural children, nudity has no connotation at all with sexual expression, with masturbation or any kind of sexual or even sensual activity. It is what it is, the absence of clothes, the state in which we were born.

If educators have such connotations, it's their problem, not the children's. That is why I believe educators should receive special professional training for practicing a consciousness based educational approach.

Let me also comment on the notion of sport, as it's often misunderstood. Sport, when rightly practiced, enhances mind-body coordination and intuition, and it also teaches respect for the body. This means also that sport should never



be something that even remotely damages the body, as it's for example the case with body building, which slowly but surely degrades and erodes the muscular joints in the ankles and knees. What is valid for adults here is even more important to observe in the education of children.

A sport like football, that brings about massive damage through regular accidents, and that often results in knee tendons to be strained or even knocked out of place, has to be totally avoided. Basketball, while it looks more gentle, is equally dangerous because when you look up to the basket for throwing the ball, you are often likely to hit another in plain face, or push against their body, which equally can result in bodily hurt.

Needless to add that violent sports such as rugby or baseball have no place in consciousness-based education because they are already paradigmatically wrong: they give the wrong signals! These sports educate children to be violent, and that is after all why they are so much appreciated in mainstream education; it's because they help training the child to accept the message 'pleasure is bad, violence is good,' which is the mainstream perversion that is ideologically built in our mainstream culture.

Mainstream education builds a body full of strife and tension, a body that is in conflict with itself; this is done intentionally as emotions are dead in a stiff and tense body.



The child's emotions being considered as 'unruly' and 'dangerous', must be 'tamed', and thus a rigid hard regimen is inflicted upon the child, especially boys, to get them to 'control their emotions.' What this leads to is that emotions are repressed, awareness about them is suppressed, and they are thus lesser accessible.

This is of course not smart because the very inability to access our emotions makes them dangerous and unpredictable. Not control is the key to sanity, but emotional awareness! Seen from this vantage point, mainstream education really is insane.

In addition, what standard education overlooks is that emotions are all interconnected within a kaleidoscopic continuum, which means that when you repress one emotion, you repress them all! This explains why children caught in the claws of mainstream education cannot experience ecstasy or joy; this is so because they are told to repress their hot emotions, anger, rage, and jealousy.

And there is one emotion never mentioned in psychology but that is nonetheless real in free children: it is temporary 'madness,' which is a joy so overwhelming that it looks like madness.

My extended research on emotions showed me clearly that the repression of emotions creates a fundamental imbalance in the mindbody, and the whole of the organism of the



child; the result are children who are 'excited' all the time, knowing no limits and disturbing the rest of the group, and children who are hyperactive, display learning disabilities and who suffer from insomnia and bedwetting.

Often, these children are labeled as depressive or even schizophrenic, while the etiology may be much more basic; when emotions are out of balance, all kinds of psychosomatic ailments can manifest, and the solution isn't as difficult as curing schizophrenia. That is why for all of these symptoms, before resorting to 'hard psychiatry,' children's emotional life and especially their emotional flow should be assessed.

When the emotional flow is blocked, a soft approach that focuses on unlocking the child's body through loving touch combined with psychotherapeutic treatment in the form of truthful communication can bring immediate results. This is so because when the lockup of the emotional flow was not for long, it is relatively easy to get things back to normal, especially with smaller children.

Psychotherapy should focus, then, on putting words on things, and first of all, listening to the child. However, loving touch and communication alone can effect miracles, not only with children, but also with adults.

This was shown by alternative psychiatrists such as Ronald David Laing in England and Thomas Szasz in the United States, who dedicated time and space to psychotic children,



engaging in co-living with those children, and doing the therapy in tidbits and little chunks, while having the child around in loving care all the time.

They reached amazing healing results. Their approach, which was propagated as Antipsychiatry, made history as a daring and valid alternative to psychiatry; today it is as revolutionary as it was when they created it; in fact it is still today not an established practice in the mental health profession.

When the emotional distortion was ingrained in the organism over a longer period of time, you can regularly notice a lock of both the emotional flow and the muscular tissues of the body. It appears that mental health is first of all characterized by the faculty to express one's emotions more or less freely, and in accordance with set and setting; this faculty of adaptation, which is a mental faculty, helps us forge and change the environment in which we are living in case our health situation requires it.

With so-called 'difficult' children, this process of adaptation doesn't work smoothly; they are either overadapted or they are rebellious and thus defy any adaptation. In such a case, it is not necessary to discard the child out into psychiatric care; instead, the educator can help the child learn to express their feelings in a way that is not doing harm, and, what is even more important, help the child understand the posi-



tive dynamics of emotions, and the benefits of expressing and communicating emotional needs.

The intellect of the child, the rational mind, can only sanely unfold when their emotional life is balanced and free from energetic blockages and anxieties. Our mental faculties cannot be separated from our emotional life.

Modern education is fundamentally flawed when it overcharges children with knowledge and trains the child only intellectually. The robots that come out of such an education will one day be our war marshals and global terrorists in not too far a future! This is so because the education of the heart, and the understanding of our emotional life and our affects are by far superior, and more difficult to bring about than the training of our mental faculties. And it is a much greater challenge for the educator! Our feelings often trigger projections that veil the educator's objective view of the child—with the result of prejudice coming in. Only personal integrity and constant work on the inner mind, as well as raising emotional awareness can help educators master this challenge.

Children whose body, mind and emotions are in a healthy state of balance will be intellectually brilliant, and this naturally, without an intellectual training in the sense of Montessori education being needed.

On the other hand, a child who was rendered a perfect mental robot by intellect boosting will always remain an emo-



tional torso, and in the extreme case he or she will be truly handicapped in their intimate life, or end up as sexual psychopaths. This is ultimately what I have to reproach against Montessori education; it bears a great danger.

To summarize, there is no alternative. Education must begin with the child's body, pass through awareness building of their emotional life, to finally reach the mental level —and not vice versa.

Music plays an important role in our psychic composure. Good music balances our mind and strengthens a sensitive and open mind. Bad music drives the psyche into a state of overexcitement; this state of mind is like a closed loop in that it prevents us from accessing our center, the infinite in us. A mind that is regularly bombarded with modern music cannot be reached by educational wisdom because it knows no silence, and there is no inner space of rest and quiet contemplation. This in turn leads to shallow thought and lacking understanding of life and the world; such a mind stays at the periphery of things and events.

The effect of music on the child's mind can be assessed under two angles, actively and passively. We all suffer music passively at certain places, in the café, in the cinema, in the supermarket, in department stores and nowadays also in airports, post offices, public halls, and subway stations, without



even talking about nightclubs and discos where loud aggressive music is considered to be a stimulant.

And yet, it seems that most people never bother about how such music affects their psyche! I have been sensitive since childhood to the impact of music on the mind and have observed how music acts upon my body, and as some of my bodily reactions were clearly alarming, my awareness became acute as to the good and bad effects music has on us. I namely registered as early as in adolescence that disco music and generally modern 4-beat music results in the following symptoms displayed by my organism:

restlessness;

incapacity to form clear thoughts;

strong sweating of hands and feet;

anxiety;

anger or even rage;

sudden claustrophobia.

Research on sound healing has shown that music directly affects our emotions, our mind, and our thoughts.

—See, for example, Jonathan Goldman, *Healing Sounds* (2002), *Tantra of Sound* (2005), and Manly P. Hall, *The Secret Teachings of All Ages* (2003)



Actively, music plays a role in education in teaching musical structure, and the notion of time, and how time transforms emotional space; this was even a topic dear to traditional education, at a time when score reading and playing a musical instrument was still considered good and useful for the education of children from well-to-do families. But unfortunately in most countries today, this positive and important tradition has been almost entirely lost, except in costly private institutions for the education of upper-class children.

The reason for this change to the worse is probably the fact that children today only in rare cases have a piano, cello or violin at their disposition, and most parents find acoustic musical instruments bulky, noisy or too expensive. As the house music tradition of the 19th century has found its end, most parents do not see a value in sending their child to musical classes. In addition, as television became a replacement of parental care and instruction, what we have here is clearly a major cultural deterioration that shall have consequences on the general education level, and the level of sensitiveness of our whole population.

To express it colloquially, the house and chamber music tradition contributes to depth, sensitiveness and authenticity, while television contributes to shallowness, insensitivity and falseness.



Before I further comment on the importance of active musical education, I would like to briefly discuss the passive influence of music upon our psychic composure. It has been established by musicology and psychology that music has a far greater impact upon our psyche and our emotions than the general public is aware of; the effects of music we passively endure in public places, are considerable, serious and astounding, to say the least. From there to mind manipulation really is only a tiny step, for subtle messages can easily be embedded in the musical carpet, even without using subliminals; a sound clip can trigger emotions, or keep certain emotions from unfolding.

Much research has been done on the effects of music in strategic places such as major department stores, and it was found that even without the use of subliminals, which is legally forbidden in most modern jurisdictions, music can have an effect on purchasing volume. It would lead too far to explain the details here, but the fact as such is corroborated by scientific research.

Music is actively used today in the media, in most public places, in department stores and fashion boutiques for influencing, and positively stimulating, the purchasing motivation of consumers. As most of this knowledge is hidden to the public, and to be found only in specialized publications, available to a scientific audience and to marketing bureaus and



advertising agencies, the average consumer is hardly if ever aware of this sort of subtle manipulation through sound carpets and fashionable music that serves other than musical purposes.

Of course, professional media experts and advertising agents know very well what I am talking about here; they are fine psychologists, knowing that consumption is not a natural drive in the human, but needs to be turned on, and turned on again, to get the consumer buy products, and buy them at still higher prices, and repeatedly—especially those products they don't really need. In the sound production business, experts know what kind of music triggers what kind of emotions, and which emotions are favorable for getting into money spending.

Also in films, the background music serves the purpose to musically underline the emotions unfolding in the spectator as the plot goes on, and this knowledge dates from the first days of the mute cinema; it is instructive to listen to old Charlie Chaplin movies and hear how the pianist reflects the emotions on stage in his play. Music, in this case, remains in a certain distance, and this distance is deliberate.

Scientific research on sound and memory has shown that when two different sound stimuli impact upon our psyche, our subconscious mind will register the underlying stimulus or music, not the dominant one.



Dr. Georgi Lozanov, a psychiatrist from Bulgaria, has positively used this specific characteristic of our brain to design a revolutionary method for learning foreign languages, originally called Suggestopedia, and today sold under the brand name Superlearning.

Students are put in a relaxed state of mind, seated in comfortable arm chairs, and listen to Baroque string music. Over this musical carpet which is the dominant sound, the teacher recites texts in the foreign language, as an underlying sound, while the students are told not to listen to the speech, but concentrate on the music, and breathe in the rhythm of the music.

With this revolutionary method, people learn difficult languages such as Arabic, Russian or Chinese without any accent in two or three months. Lozanov used the technique originally for teaching reading and writing to school children and found that, in the regular case, a child would learn to perfectly read and write in about six months only.

What happens is that the brain passively registers not just the words of the foreign language, but whole patterns, which include grammar, pronunciation, syntax and all that is needed to speak and understand that language, and all this without 'studying' anything. The learning content is first passive, and at the end of the course will be activated through conversation in the foreign language.



There are no translations, there is no grammar to learn, and there are no mistakes to make; the whole process is smooth and no effort is needed for learning complex languages.

The key to fast learning is our subconscious mind, and also our access, during self-hypnosis, to the universal library of the collective unconscious where all grammars are stored, and a lot more knowledge.

Now, what most people ignore is that we are involuntarily often times in a state of reverie which is similar to the alpha state, the predominant wave length characteristic for deep relaxation, hypnosis and self-hypnosis.

When we are poised and relaxed, we can slide quite smoothly in the alpha state, often without being aware of the change in our brain wave structure; it is in these moments that we are especially sensitive to input, and our subconscious will easily absorb it and memorize it. Thus, when you stroll in a quiet moment through a luxury department store, enjoying the sounds, perfumes and colors, and when you are not in a hurry, and get into a relaxed state of mind, the background music does have a marked impact upon your mind, and you register, once you are aware of these hidden connections, that you once of a sudden go to buy something, while you came to the place 'just for looking around.'



What is interesting is that we rationalize such an experience instead of wondering why we suddenly discover we 'need' something that just a minute before did not even in a dream hit our mind; we say, 'Oh yes, I forgot I need to buy this, good I see it now, it reminds me that I need this.' While the truth is that if you really needed that thing, you would have remembered it upon entering the place, and would have directed yourself to find it, and buy it. But you didn't, and were strolling around 'just for looking' and that thing was hitting your mind. And when that happens, it's not a coincidence, for sure! Our whole consumer society runs on creating needs, not just meeting existing needs, which it also intends, but the peak of surplus profit it creates, it creates it not by fulfilling our latent needs for shelter, clothing, food and transport, but by creating new, industrial and artificial needs.

Now, why did I tell you all of this? I told you because responsible educators know these things and protect children in certain ways from being brainwashed with publicity. For you need to know that with children, the input received through advertising in television and at public places is even more indelibly carved in their subconscious minds as this is the case with adults. It is for this reason that psychologists advise parents to not let children sleep in front of television.

And there is another reason. Research also found that children naturally are more often in the alpha state, and even



the theta state, than this is the case with adults; thus in these moments their minds are easily accessed by, and imprinted with, outside stimuli. Hence, in those moments, children are easily influenced and manipulated with publicity. This fact is one of the main reasons why medical doctors, psychologists and parent organizations increasingly resort to activism and public awareness building against the dangers of violence in our television programs. This is not an exaggerated concern, because patterns of violence have been assessed in children, in controlled research, after having watched a variety of programs, and it was found that the most negative for the psyche of a child are violent animations, comics and cartoons in 'Disney' style.

Educators who love the children they care for will do all they can to protect them from such kind of negative and dangerous conditioning to violence, and they have to find a *modus vivendi* with their students to control their television diet.

I know this is a rather hairy topic that triggers lots of controversy, and media control surely is not a 'nice' thing to do, but there is no way to avoid these problems in a society where children are bombarded by media input. Controlling media input certainly strikes hard when children are already addicted to daily media consumption, while when this is not (yet) the case, it's much less of a problem. With media addicted children, simply curtailing down the hours of media



consumption is regularly felt as a brutal measure and they react with withdrawal or outright rebellion, some even with autistic symptoms.

So this doesn't really work. What works instead is to offer alternatives, without negative judgments, because judging only invokes resistance, and the child will attempt to justify what they want to see. It's ineffective to tell youngsters about the dangers of media consumption; most of them intuitively know that anyway, but that doesn't change a bit, and when you think about it, it can't change anything, simply because a child doesn't have the control mechanisms built in that an adult disposes of. They feel their addiction as a pleasure boost, of course, and that is their primary sensory experience. Hence, this is not really something you can discuss about with a child. They will simply say 'I like that' and what can you say against that affirmation?

The best method for avoiding a child being endangered by a certain kind of music or a certain kind of television or movie program is to subtly divert the child's attention from it, by offering alternatives, and not just fake alternatives, but things you know the child will be enthusiastic to do.

Why most parents and educators don't use this strategy is that it involves time and effort. It's easier to let children enjoy what they like and trust that because 'everybody is doing it,' it can't be that bad, after all. For example when you know



that the children in your class enjoy running outside in the rain, and you divert them from a violent television program with the suggestion to 'go out in the rain and play,' you are part of the game, and your getting wet can hardly be avoided. That is the simple reason why most educators and most parents don't do what they know is right to do. They don't want to get wet, to ride the bike in the hot sun, to go swimming in the cold water, to take the car out of the garage for 'driving to the ice-skating arena' and so on and so forth. The power of television would be none if we could offer children natural and sane alternatives on a consistent basis.

I have had parents and educators in front of me who did not find anything objectionable with the television consumption of their children, but were fault-finding music producers for the allegedly 'violent and obscene' music they are composing, prohibiting children and even adolescents to join their friends in a rock concert, or in a disco. I find that concern relatively artificial and nonsensical, to be true, because for one, shared activities are always better for the child than isolated home movie consumption, and for two, the time children pass in such locations is relatively limited. We are talking about two or three hours per week here, or even less. But strangely enough, many child-protecting thoughts are focused upon rather unimportant matters, while the big issues remain untouched.



I have had parents and educators in front of me who persisted that despite accidents already occurring, a certain staircase or playground was still 'good enough,' just for avoiding a minor expenditure, until the big accident happened, and then it was argued that 'one should have known before.'

What I want to say is that a loving and caring educator is always alert to protect children from things or activities that are really harmful, while being permissive regarding all others. It is the wisdom and experience of a good educator to know where the limits are, and how to distinguish harmful from harmless activities, and to assess potential danger. Any extreme taken when doing such an assessment leads to either accidents that could have been avoided, or it renders the child anxious and withdrawn because of overprotection.

When I weigh the pro and con, and see it from my experience as an educator, I must say that overprotection is worse than negligence, really! Nature has a certain protective attention built in, and with children, even when they fall, and fall hard, the damage is always much less than when it happens to an adult. And healing is much more rapid. By contrast, the psychic damage done to a child that is overprotected for many years is not to repair, a fact that many adults know who have lived through such childhoods and later end up in psychotherapy. Once in therapy, then, they cripple along for years without significant improvement, because they suffer



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from constant fear of life, recurring panic attacks and an overall high anxiety level.

Now, regarding active musical education, what I observed is that today it's rather difficult to accompany a child who is musically gifted, when the family is not musical and doesn't bother to build something like a 'musical culture' in their daily family life. Then, what happens, and it happened to me, the child will quickly feel to be an outsider and a marginal freak within their family context.

That is why I think it is better, in such cases, to not push children into active musical practice, without being assured of the full collaboration of their parents, but instead showing children the beauty of music by listening to good music, and by doing that on a regular basis.

I am conscious of the fact that in this context, to talk about 'sensibilizing' children for musical input, as it's often put in educational forums, is a ridiculous concern because natural children are anyway sensitive, and they are especially sensitive to music. What educators have to do is to protect this natural sensitivity of the child against a very insensitive culture that systematically desensibilizes children and adolescents, because, to put it colloquially, real feelings today are 'no more in.' What is 'in' is toughness, and rude manners, showing-off with 'big brand names' in front of the peer group, and faking a 'cool' composure in all and every situation.



What is that, being 'cool'? Is it simply to be brutal and insensitive, to be a nerd, to be bare of any compassion? It's really not a positive value, but one our modern popular culture is pervaded with; it's insane, but most children do not look through the veil of cultural lies and distortions, and they just follow the trends. That means when you as an educator stress sensitivity, you are actually swimming against the stream, and you are doing something that is ultimately not politically correct.

To repeat what I said in the Introduction, doing a sane education in an insane society is truly a challenge. It requires all our energy, all our commitment, all our dedication to truth and human progress, and it also requires constant learning. We can do it only if we have a real passion for education and the wellbeing of children, for if we do not derive an intrinsic pleasure from it, we will not be ready to cash in all the frustrations that inevitably go along with such a professional choice.

Without more, the profession of the educator is not a place in the sun, and how much less in a society that works counter to sane education, and to sane educators. It's a struggle, but that struggle has a deep meaning for it connects us with children. For a child, growing up is in most cases not a 'nice' experience, as many people wrongly believe.

This is even more true in the case of gifted children, and it's about those children I am talking in this chapter, for ordi-



nary children have very little interest to invest time and energy over years and years for learning and mastering a musical instrument.

I learnt from experience that if children are not really musically gifted, it's a torture for them to learn playing an instrument for, as we all know, musical performance requires much sacrifice, consistency and a basic mastering of stage fright and negative emotions in the form of recurring frustration. It's only when the child experiences a genuine enjoyment with music that they will build the endurance to master a musical instrument with all that this entails over long periods of time.

When the talent is there, the child doesn't need to be much encouraged, as genius has a built-in ability for realizing itself. Another essential benefit that comes with studying music is that children learn musical logic which is pure cosmic logic comparable to mathematical logic, and the child's mind will gain in clarity and clear communication ability.

In my long years of experience with musical performance and composition, and having met many musicians in my life, I can affirm that among all possible people from all possible cultures I met in my life, musicians are by far the clearest, most intelligent and most wistful people I met, and also the most harmonious people. Their emotional life is balanced.



And my experience here certainly is not singular, it is not a subjective impression; for example, among writers, you do not have the same psychic setup. Writers tend to be much more conflictual in their daily life, in their communications, and often much less clear, less simple and more convoluted, and much less harmonious!

With painters, there is harmony, but also egocentrism, while I have seldom met musicians who really were egocentric; if so, they were bad musicians. I found great musicians always really open-minded and harmonious in social exchange, while focused and often serious in their overall attitude, but always open for sharing and for social exchange. This is generally less the case with writers who tend to be much more introvert, as a general rule.

There is another benefit for children who learn a musical instrument; they become more humble because they learn that all great mastery is to be paid with 'sweat and tears.' While genius certainly is inborn, it needs to be developed through mastery, and self-expression, and a lot of persistence! This explains why children who perform early in life, and so much the more when they are prodigies, are more disciplined, more mature and more sensitive than the average child. They also tend to be more responsible in their daily dealings with others, and they understand others better than ordinary children.



By contrast, a child who only plays all day long and was never exposed to the harsh sides of life, who has not learnt self-discipline for mastering an instrument, a sport, a computer, or anything else of value, will never attain the brilliance and elegance of children who are on their way to genius. In most cases, those masses of children remain mediocre consumers who regard life as a residual concept, or a set of standard behaviors, without penetrating into the depth of life and soul, and without participating in the cosmic drama of living. That is why learning a musical instrument and getting involved in musical performance as a long-term endeavor is one of the greatest and most intelligent ways of achieving to become a complete human.

I have actually found that many ordinary children, and many neurotic and hyperactive children have artistic talent, but the problem is that they are too restless, and too shallow for doing anything in a consistent manner. It is not enough that a child be gifted for music or arts if parents are indifferent to their uniqueness, and if the children themselves came to value icecream and television more than learning. In such a case the precious essence of innocence is lost forever.

I came to believe, over the years, that the signal for genius is more of revolt, than of adaptation. Children who easily adapt to the status quo and who go along with all kind of adverse conditioning, without voicing their needs for one time,



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will later in life often become depressive. For depression really is nothing else than the inability to express oneself, one's deepest will and one's emotions!

Albert Einstein is a vivid example that comes to mind, as it shows that somebody who loves music and was a brilliant violinist doesn't need to 'make a musical career.' But the genius Einstein is unthinkable without the genial musician in the physicist, and the genial freak in the musician.

That is the secret of genius, it's not one-sidedness, but a cosmic inner setup that somehow embraces the whole of creation in one flash of insight that lasts a lifetime!

Einstein, as it is notorious, revolted against everything, before he ever started to learn anything. He did never finalize school nor university, and simply escaped those institutions, to a point to break with his parents and go on his own when he was barely sixteen years old.

FIVE ARGUMENTS FOR A NEW EDUCATION

ARGUMENT ONE

Education Needs to Be Individualized



CRITIQUE

Institutional education does not serve the child since it does not recognize the existence of individual, and individually gifted, children. For mass education, there is a mass, a herd, a quantity of humans to be educated, and not a variety of unique individuals.

This is the reason why mass education is destructive and leads to devolution, not to evolution. It does not serve cultural, but if ever, military needs. It destroys what is human in us. It suffocates sensitivity, and cancels out the individual differences and particularities of children so that they fit into a standard scheme of thinking and acting.

It conditions good humans to become bad citizens. It brings about bureaucrats by systematically destroying individual thought capacities and creativity in children and adolescents. It brutalizes the child by ruthless competition and even physical violence in order to transform them into robots that fit, like wheels, into a soulless consumer machinery.

SUGGESTION

Schools, colleges and universities can redraft their educational approach and tailor it to the individual student.

Within today's and tomorrow's network society and the computerized management of data, it is relatively easier today than before in human history to offer educational services



not in a standard, but in a customized fashion so as to really meet the needs and expectations of the individual student.

This will make for high educational effectiveness, a better management of resources, and higher learning motivation of each and every student enrolled in a program, class or curriculum.

Before hand, this new educational paradigm is more cost-intensive, but the higher effectiveness and success rate of this approach will return the investment within a reasonable time span.



ARGUMENT TWO

Education Needs to be Quality-Focused

CRITIQUE

Standard education focuses on a quantity of children to be educated, and it measures educational success by looking at groups of students, on an institutional, regional or even national level. Measuring is done using statistical methods, without looking at the quality of the individual educational success or failure.

The United Nations and UNICEF have driven this paradigm to its extreme when they set their mission to be one of mass alphabetization on a global level! This approach must fail to give satisfying results because education cannot be quantified, and all such measuring beyond the individual student level is a mock trial that serves to please the eye of the beholder, not a real assessment of educational success. Human potential cannot be quantified, it can only be assessed on the individual human level.

SUGGESTION

To focus on every individual student is only possible when, from the start, we have a qualitative and not a quantitative approach to education. The quality approach does not ask for efficiency, but for integrated solutions that serve every child. The family model ideally fits the purpose of life educa-



tion since it is the form of education that comes about naturally. It is, so as to say, created by life itself. It is not artificial and integrates without hurt any particularity of any child in a form of shared experience.

Thus, the first step of drafting a new educational paradigm with regard to quality-based education would be to empower the family, to serve as the primary educational toolbox, prior to any and all schooling, be it public or private.

The second step is to keep educational institutions focused on quality in the sense of assessing the individual academic success in terms of educational satisfaction, learning motivation, learning skills, learning success, in a general way, without stressing to assess the learning content.

Learning content is more and more relative, as our total information has since long superseded the capacity of the individual human brain; hence the need for producing excellent and highly motivated learners, not depressed super-brains.



ARGUMENT THREE

Education Needs to Foster Intelligence, not Knowledge

CRITIQUE

Standard education is focused upon the accumulation of knowledge, while it does not really understand what is intelligence. Most people confuse intelligence with knowledge and intellectualism without understanding that the accumulation of knowledge is merely mechanical and not a sign of intelligence. Knowledge had value in the past when careers were such that one could make it through life with basically one education, refreshing lacunas through professional training and seminars.

Today, knowledge is even more important, but for the most part doesn't need to be memorized because it's available everywhere, through computer networks, databanks and the Internet. Hence, standard education is out of sync with reality since quite some decades, because it is out of sync with the nature of our network society and therefore more or less totally ineffective.

SUGGESTION

Intelligence is entirely different from knowledge. It is not mechanical, but a natural by-product of emotional integrity and wholeness: to grow healthy means to not be fragmented and to be rather intuitive.



Children and geniuses have in common that they are emotionally intact and that they are not fragmented, and that they are highly intuitive!

Our rational mind (left brain hemisphere) only functions at full capacity when it is connected to our irrational mind (right brain hemisphere) so that intellectual/analytic and intuitive/synthetic thought processes go hand in hand.

Then, regularly, the rational and the emotional part of us are well balanced and we experience a state of lasting inner peace.

Hence, the new paradigm focuses upon fostering intelligence through designing a learning environment that is multi-vectorial, where emotional values are respected, and where all four quadrants of intelligence are being developed, the logical, intuitive, sequential and emotional intelligence.

Whosoever is truly intelligent can handle knowledge in a way to optimize creative output in whatever field of study. In addition, this new paradigm fosters health and psychic health because it significantly reduces learning stress and anxiety.

ARGUMENT FOUR

Education Needs to be Holistic



CRITIQUE

Intellectual capacities and skills that have no connection with the emotional life of the person and that are disconnected from the right brain as well as the heart are truly dangerous. They make for humans to become ruthless and cold-blooded functionaries that are able to lead concentration camps or will click out bomb rains on forest children if those actions only fit in their thought concepts.

Only sensitivity acts counter to cruelty, not the cultivation of thought systems, ideals or religions. The danger of the Cartesian approach to science is that it more or less completely disregards nature, imposing concepts upon nature, and thus projecting truth upon nature, instead of trying to understand the truth inherent in nature.

This is the simple reason why Cartesian science destroys nature. The same is of course true for education. When education is reductionist and disregards soul values, and is not imbedded in emotional integrity, it is destructive, producing fears, depression, and even suicide.

SUGGESTION

Holistic thinking goes along with emotional integrity. Intelligence, sensitivity and understanding for the complex functions of life can only be developed when cognition is imbedded in the emotional life of the person and is thus a re-



sult of wholeness, and not of fragmentation. As nature is itself coded in holographic patterns, the holistic approach is best for understanding the truth inherent in nature, thereby facilitating scientific solutions that are integrated and that are compatible with nature, and sustainable.

Holistic education ideally prepares students for becoming holistic scientists, artists, doctors, or bankers, or whatever other profession one may think of.

Holistic thinking is useful everywhere, in every discipline, and in every kind of profession because it looks for integrated solutions that are naturally intelligent. This is a tremendously important paradigm change and it is a gigantic amount of work to redraft all our educational curricula in a holistic fashion because it entails to redesign our entire educational and institutional apparatus.



ARGUMENT FIVE

Education Needs to be Private and Competitive

CRITIQUE

In Europe and most countries except the United States, most of the educational cycle is in the hands of governments, be this service free of charge, be it, as in most Asian countries, subject to a fee.

Experience has shown that governments used to work rather slowly and ineffectively, that they waste resources rather than using them economically, that they follow ideological rather than functional management principles and that they are often years behind the general standard of social development. In addition, when all is offered 'for free,' students tend to take it all 'for granted' and learning motivation drops.

SUGGESTION

I have seen a dramatic difference between my law studies in Germany and in the United States. In Germany, services provided by the university for actually enrolling students in a later work life are completely non-existent, while in the United States they are staged and orchestrated in an exemplary manner, with the result that the transition from university career to professional life is smooth and without hurt. This has of course a price tag, and students often have to work for paying



their tuition fees, but this work experience is again a positive addendum to their professional cycle.

I suggest governments worldwide to privatize education, all education, as much as possible and give it over to the natural competition inherent in the market. This will make for more professional quality education, for better and more qualified teachers and professors, for higher learning motivation of the students, and for overall higher learning results.

It has to be considered what an enormous space of responsibility would be off the shoulders of governments, so that they can better focus on their real and most important tasks, that is to draft effective laws (Legislative), to administer the public domain for the best of all citizens (Executive) and to watch over justice being rendered in an equitable manner while safeguarding constitutional guarantees, and give the individual citizen peace of mind (Judicature).