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GHOSTS OF SCHOOL. WHO YOU GONNA CALL?

Fantasmas de lo escolar. ¿A quién vas a llamar?

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ABSTRACT

This article proposes a series of theoretical approaches that allow a better understanding of the past and future of schools based on a reconsideration of J. A. Comenius ideas on this subject, mapping out the most important points that have led to the current crisis. The article's approach combines the works of previous post-structuralist and accelerationist authors.

In the first section, the article presents a diagnosis that illustrates how old school-technology resists the acceleration of new knowledge transmission and appropriation technologies (digital and artificial intelligence). This creates a nostalgia that tends to paralyse school technology and hinder any opportunity of it being reconciled with future projects. Moreover, the study shows how pedagogy harmfully insists on mandates and slogans that prove to be impotent in the face of the disengagement between the school technology that developed in the 17th century and the form that operates in the 21st century.

In the second part, the study notes how productive a phantasmagoric approach can be. This approach encourages negotiation between the old and the new with

the strict condition that the Commenian pansophic ideal (all human knowledge for all human beings) that originally saw the school as a means to that end, is not abandoned, but instead is freed from being subject to one single educational format, and so proposes a progressive and achievable outlook in the face of the current crisis.

Key words: school technology; digital technology; accelerationism; pansophy; Comenius.

RESUMEN

El artículo propone una serie de conceptos teóricos que permiten comprender el pasado y el futuro de las instituciones escolares a partir de una recuperación de la subsistencia de las ideas de J. A. Comenius en el campo de lo escolar, proyectando las líneas más importantes que desembocan en la crisis actual, utilizando un enfoque que combina estudios previos de autores posestructuralistas y aceleracionistas.

En la primera parte, se presenta un diagnóstico que muestra cómo la vieja tecnología escolar resiste la aceleración de las nuevas tecnologías de transmisión y apropiación de saberes (digital e inteligencia artificial) generando un efecto de nostalgia que tiende a paralizarla y a obturar toda posibilidad de conciliarla con proyectos futuros. A la vez, el estudio pone de manifiesto la nociva recurrencia por parte de la pedagogía a la recuperación de mandatos y consignas que se muestran impotentes frente al desacople tecnológico entre los dispositivos escolares surgidos en el siglo XVII y los que operan en el siglo XXI.

En la segunda parte, el estudio encuentra lo productivo que puede llegar a ser un ejercicio fantasmagórico que propicie una negociación entre lo viejo y lo nuevo, con la condición de no resignar el ideal pansófico comeniano (todo el saber humano para todos los seres humanos) que originalmente dio sentido a lo escolar como medio para alcanzar ese fin, sino más bien liberándolo de la sujeción a un único formato educativo y, por tanto, proponiendo un horizonte progresista y realizable frente a la crisis actual.

Palabras clave: tecnología escolar; tecnología digital; aceleracionismo; Pansofía; Comenius.

She nodded, wondering why she could absorb
his words so easily.
Perhaps because she had known even before her capture
that the world she had known was dead.
She had already absorbed that loss to the degree that she could.

(O. Butler, 1989, p. 28)

1. GHOSTS

Until now we have clung to schools as objects that are natural and immanent in itself. As eternally active things with no dimension other than their own multiplication in the past and the future. Or, rather, we have applied an eternalised vision to school systems that did not include a perspective on complexity and autopoiesis and without noticing asymptotic properties that put it at risk.

As long ago as the 17th century, Comenius, in chapter XI version of the *Didactica Magna*, (1984, p. 82), noted that «Hitherto there have been no perfect schools». As in many other passages in this and other works, the great Bohemian pedagogue attributes two functional characteristics to the pedagogical thought of modernity: on the one hand, this critique of schools was present even as it was being founded on this discourse. And on the other hand, the identification of this constituent fault in order to draw from it an inference of what «a true school» should be, even if this idea of what it should be is always viewed as a utopian search that enshrines the essential presence, from its origins, of disagreement about schooling, a sort of self-conserved melancholy, a constituent neurosis in our modern pedagogical thought.

But this view of the school as something natural is no longer effective, even though we uphold it against all odds and against all intuition. As Baudrillard (1977) warned in his gibe at the sense of satisfaction of the Foucauldians who believed they had found the key to interpreting social discipline, powers are sadly only effective up to the moment we discover them, until they reveal their presence to us, until we see the king's pathetic nakedness with our own eyes: once the sound of the last bell in the palace has faded only the roaming ghosts remain and the desired object appears before us with its two opposing faces: the face of the purifying angel we should never have rejected and the face of the fearsome monster that might, at best, be domesticated by experts who know the labyrinths of its secrets, by specialists in exorcising its sinister sides.

And the last bells of the great celebration in the school palace tolled some time ago. The tenth bell sounded in the 1970s, when structuralism found that schools could not free themselves from the general rules of capitalist society and so, not only did they not live up to the egalitarian tenets they preached, but, in terms of their dynamic, they contributed to the reproduction of capital instead of fulfilling their boast of creating the conditions to overcome it. And, the structuralists concluded that knowledge transfer at school would struggle to overcome intergenerational transmission of economic and cultural privileges and poverty. Some late exegetes of this structuralism have found a possibility of struggle and resistance in these organic constants and have built identities that make it possible to absorb the blow hopefully and decisively: the bewilderment from the sound of the bell also provokes these nostalgic dalliances, which we analyse below.

The eleventh bell rang in the most unexpected of ways: globalisation. Schools are the effect of a process of globalisation of education that began in the early 19th century and is still ongoing. That a photograph of a school in the middle of Acre in the Amazon is uncannily similar to a school in the centre of Helsinki, in the Villa of Ormen, in Yerevan or any school from a poor neighbourhood in Seoul is no longer a surprise to anyone. And when we set out on the trail of how these different schools were formed, we find that the school (school technology) reproduced itself on a global scale with classrooms, systemic state government, content unified across the country and adult-child asymmetries, among other mechanisms (Narodowski, 1994). These common expressions derive from that global spread: schools are (increasingly) the same as each other.

But the globalisation of communications and international consensus that are hegemonised less by *ad hoc* educational organisations such as the Liga Internacional de la Escuela Nueva (international new school league) or UNESCO and more by bodies from trade, finance and the global market like the World Bank or the OECD, have tended to standardise areas that school technology used to leave up to governments, publishers of educational texts, local educationalists and teachers: complex international and national evaluations produce standardised data about the cognitive behaviour of hundreds of millions of students and teachers from thousands of schools around the world. These data are processed, analysed and packaged in different formats: text files for media consumption, PDFs with images and hyper-simplified infographics for schools as «feedback for improvement», more sophisticated spreadsheets for analysts and PASW or SPAD-N for experts who work on preparing and consolidating large databases and on statistical processing of information so that they can perform principal component analyses and cluster analyses.

Data have become the star of the global education show and the unexpected hero — Finland — enabled devotees of the old order to reveal paradoxically — that is, through standardised evaluations — the uselessness of implementing standardised evaluations. But China, Singapore and Vietnam, countries that would not pass the most basic tests of democracy and rule of law, have also become international role models thanks to the combination of data. To paraphrase the popular saying: a nominal base of perfectly plotted and tidily ordered students producing real-time data about what they are learning in the hand is worth two pedagogical texts discussing liberty and democracy in the bush.

So, the delicate and artisanal individual or collective structure of school teachers who prided themselves on creating a solution to school problems faces a brutal, stark question: Where is the evidence for this? If the answer does not contain packets of scrubbed data and if a proposal is not scalable, transferable from the micro-school level of pedagogical experience to the fact stripped down to its core essence through a handful of undeniably neo-classical assumptions backed by... data, it is unlikely to

be accepted in this new global consensus. Unless it is admitted with an empathetic and compassionate nod, which, with an expression of hidden contempt notes how rudimentary things were before the ringing of this penultimate bell.

This fascination with data that signals the end of the banquet is not limited to schooling; social media illustrates this with each like, with each view, with the visibility of the number of followers. Nonetheless, its impact on schooling is troubling: the old authority of teachers will be diluted in quantified paraphernalia and procedures where they go from being the centre of legitimacy to being just another cog in the production function.

The meaning of the most recent and final bell, the one marking the terrible midnight, is so well-known and its effects are so widespread that it is hard to add anything new, even when the wavelength of the consequences of its reverberation is such that the most sensitive pedagogical ears cannot ignore its sound, even with the most strenuous therapeutic efforts. The almost hypnotic effect on a multitude of educators who are willing to sacrifice themselves to the plans of the gentle hum of the ringing of the final bell has not only not stopped, but reproduces itself (the hum of the bell and the consequent hypnosis) and it affects those tiring silences that pedagogy had to keep quiet in the last few centuries.

It is — what doubt could there be? — a matter of applying so-called educational or digital technologies to educational processes. A variety of old inventions ranging from radio equipment to film equipment, from television to video, from the old teaching machine of Skinner to personal computers, from IT classes and school computer labs to devices that, since Negroponte, function online and are so small and ubiquitous that they go unnoticed in students' pockets or rucksacks, to the extent that a number of school systems have had the everlasting idea of banning them: an enduring idea from the old territorial locations of the schools, albeit with laughable effects since the bell has sounded.

Such is the force of the technological onslaught that it has even captured the signifier itself. We know that schools are a technology; a very powerful one that can organise large quantities of knowledge and articulate it with large human groups, especially in the early stages of their lives, in a way that is sophisticated with regards to times, spaces, hierarchies, grades and orders. And it can capture, in a space of confinement with clearly delimited times, an infantilised population that is forbidden from doing the work it had done alongside its parents for millennia. A technology classified as being of guardianship or care by some or of detention by others but which, whatever we call it, enables biopolitical control of childhood and regulation, or at least attempted regulation, of demographic flows and entry to markets of production and consumption, as well as training in endogamic social cohesion practices.

A technology which was also the most powerful in history at distributing human knowledge, going so far as to make many of us optimistic about closing the gap written technology opened seven thousand years ago in relation to oral technology, the technology that is found in the biological machinery along with the capacity for abstraction as an effect of neurobiological neocortical processes. In effect, modernity attempted to reunify the specifically human genericness that the written register had broken, excluding those who were not granted literacy from knowledge. Thanks to school technology, there would no longer be excuses for ignorance, generalised enlightenment was within reach of a bourgeoisie that still regarded itself as revolutionary and there actually were advances in access to knowledge that could not be hidden for a large part of humankind.

But, alas, this technology is not THE technology. The old technology is the school alone: the new technology is digital technology. And this terminological battle (lost before it even began, incidentally) simply reflects a much more important capitulation: It is now a some time since school technology surrendered its monopoly of the processes of distributing knowledge, not just because of digital technology colonising new previously untouched spaces and expanding the constrained and limited physical continuum by folding and unfolding infinite virtual spaces, but because school technology, and with it teachers in particular, is losing legitimacy with regards to its original attributes and so has no choice but to turn to the construction of legitimacy in everyday activities, meaning that some battles can be won but others, many others, can be lost. And lost they will be.

And these new technologies appear to harm our humanity, our unified genericness, our modern drive for equality. This is not new in human history; anarchists and Luddites destroyed steam-powered machines, which in the process of urbanisation and industrialisation had overturned old forms of human relations (expressed as working relations), alienating capitalists and workers in different sectors from one another and, at the same time, both groups from humankind.

Pedagogy observes with sad resignation the dehumanisation of the humanised scene that the school had attempted and, why not, managed to rebuild after the hiatus of fatal alienation resulting from the emergence of writing. How did this happen? This invasion of screens, networks and artificial intelligence comprises two distinctive elements that radically subvert the peaceful harmony of school technology. The first is the notion of future itself; the second is acceleration.

Jean-Baptiste Say, in the first periods of political turbulence and confusion of capitalism, said that at those times everything was accelerating because people were encouraged to consume all of their income. His *Traité d'Économie Politique* (1861) was published in the maelstrom of turbulence and confusion of British and French capitalism, which Marx a few years later called the overwhelming or unhindered stage of capital, when industrial technology advanced relentlessly over those who

operated the machines and ended up being operated by them, in an already evident assemblage between the external and the internal.

However, the brief history of school technology shows that its development is much more akin to an un-unhindered capitalism as eras that are less voluptuous and predatory enable the periods of waiting typical of schooling. In effect, schools require calm rhythms to allow for gradual processes that take months, years and decades to follow paths laid out in advance. Paths of waiting that take many years, from the age of 3 or 4 up to 18 and much older. Times subject to static spaces where what is to happen is set out in advance in documents approved by a governmental *nihil obstat*, the modification of which takes more long years of deliberation.

In fact, the historiographic studies by Querrien (2005) have shown that the predominant school technology of the first half of the 19th century — which has survived to the present day — was much less effective in terms of capitalist organisation and morality than the attempts by Joseph Lancaster and Jeremy Bentham to introduce utilitarian educational practices that greatly reduced periods of schooling and subordinated gradualness to individual performance and not to the annual organisation of schools, as eventually happened. We could, like Querrien, tentatively suggest some answers to the question of why the Lancasterian method did not succeed given that its organisation displayed a clear correspondence with industrial organisation. We find ourselves tempted to infer that Lancasterian organisation was the child of the unhindered capitalist stage while the consolidation of capitalism and states with the ability to collect revenues and redistribute them in impoverished sectors meant that times could be extended: the second half of the 20th century was the century of the school, resulting in the growth of all of the hopes that the pansophic ideal Comenius had set out — human knowledge for all human beings — might at some point come to pass.

The drama of schooling is the slow but constant collapse of the overarching certainties characteristic of a new un-unhindered capitalism. The fiscal crisis of the state in the 1960s, the decline of the welfare state, the financial crisis of 2007-2009, the rise of platform capitalism towards 2015 and the pandemic of 2020 seem to indicate that capitalist society is no longer built on stable foundations and that cyclical crises happen on such short cycles that the very concept of cycle starts to seem redundant. In this scenario, school days become interminable, unbearably so, and the vicious cycle of delegitimization sets itself in motion as the rigid offer of curriculum documents contrasts with the *à la carte* wisdom of the internet, and the asymmetry of the teacher–student relationship contrasts with the torrent of flattened interaction on social media, where to be a celebrity, it is not necessary to spend time accumulating knowledge but instead to seduce and earn likes here and now: if schooling took long-term investment, sacrifice and deferral, digital culture has rhythms of decreasing temporal preference that would outrage the old Say. While

schooling involved planning, accumulation and long time periods, digital culture, Baudrillard also noted, is a culture of immediate rejection and realisation: I don't know what I want but I want it now.

In addition to this, China has shown that efficient, hyper-customised capitalist production is possible with flexible organisation of an infinite supply of human capital at ridiculous international prices without the markets deriving from this economic organisation finding that the construction of the liberal citizenry of which the school boasted of being a monopoly operator is necessary: human, civil and workers' rights make products more expensive, and school education works very well without creativity, originality or the other values promoted by pedagogical elites. All of this has been subsumed in what are known as «soft socio-economic skills», which serve to soften the impact with these times of neo-unhindered capitalism.

The future, then, is no longer recognisable and if it ever was, it does not seem to be the subject of conspiracies. «What type of man do we want to train?» personalists, Freirian educators and critical pedagogues asked themselves in a pure *edufuturist* intrigue at times when the rational will of the pedagogue devised the possible and aligned efforts towards the impossible. This question became obsolete, not only because that generic man is divided into multiple parts, and indeed a question of this type would be rejected as sexist, but because the utopia of the what-for sinks into the mud of the immediacy and impossibility of thinking the discontinuities that traverse us. And if a pedagogue were to ask this question, it would laconically be answered with another, «Where are you asking from?», in an endless exchange of folding and unfolding.

The cancellation of the future of schooling explains why there is no school science fiction, or to paraphrase Jameson (2002), why we can imagine the end of the world but not the end of schooling as we know it. Because, apparently, it is impossible for us to dream something else outside these limits, beyond these boundaries. Not even science fiction has been able to transgress the limits of these pedagogical finitudes, rather predictably replacing teachers with robots in cases like the stories of Isaac Asimov (1973).

Liotard (2018) however went further: the death of the teacher is not the result of an easily-imaginable replacement by android technology but rather of the disappearance of the asymmetrical social relations that gave rise to the position: teachers become intermediaries, mere providers of knowledge adapted to demand, without the reflexive capacity to continue the radical otherness typical of schools. In any case, they would be zombies, not robots.

On the other hand, it is not just the future but also acceleration that questions the old order of schooling that has us trapped with no way out, like in those haunted mansions where options for escape always open doors that lead to a wall.

Schools were a technology that worked on the basis of hyper-refined adult fuel: subjects who were educators with the knowledge that they possess knowledge and bear a radical otherness and can project a clear and distinct other onto students defined by their lack of knowledge, values, *savoir vivre*; ultimately, their heteronomy. The foundational asymmetry of this relationship is defined in the context of what Margaret Mead (2009) called postfigurative cultures; namely, relatively slow and stable changes that progressively accumulate in those who have lived through more times; in adult generations, the people who transmit this set of knowledges to new generations introducing them into a system of signs that include traditions of which the adults — the teachers — are legitimate and trustworthy ambassadors. As we can deduce, the old Durkheim's definition of education that we all repeat on automatic pilot — transmission of knowledge from older generations to young generations — is postfigurative.

But our culture has changed and nobody is legitimised through traditions any longer; even the oldest lineages — whether political or religious — must be validated with contemporary expressions or, at least, with knowing winks to disruption. Changes are so constant and abrupt that the knowledge accumulated by older people is at constant risk of obsolescence in an economy that does not produce enduring objects whose owners boast of their durability but rather goods with planned short expiry dates whose owners now boast of how they constantly replace them with new and more efficient models. It is those who are processed in these changes — the newly arrived who are not bound to tradition: children — who display the greatest plasticity when operating in changing scenarios; it is they who maintain efficacy: a prefigurative culture.

This does not mean that children and adolescents *know more* than adults, in the sense of quantity of cognitive units, but that adults must constantly reconstruct their scheme of knowledge and their values when encountering social demands and that people who are less burdened by the dead weight of traditions will have more plasticity to proceed successfully. As in the Disney film *Moana* (Schurer *et al.*, 2016), if the princess followed tradition and obeyed its mandates, her people would be trapped in its own extinction. But what she does is not merely to disobey her father or challenge power as would be understood in postfigurative cultures; indeed, *Moana* never stops loving her father to whom she extends a gaze that is more commiseratory than challenging. It is a matter of improvement: the princess does not transgress the law but instead reinvents it when confronting constant changes; she does not reject tradition in the style of a revolutionary of modernity, but rather transforms it, quickly and even indolently, into its flexible and adaptable opposite.

This logic of acceleration dirties the adult fuel that is characteristic of schooling and sets limits to the depth of its oxidising agent — childhoods and adolescences — severely restricting its action, especially because of the difficulties of shaping

asymmetries in the vertigo of the explosion of consumable knowledge on the internet, of new flattened relations of social media and of artificial intelligence promising to customise the emergent possibilities.

The school of parsimony and waiting does not connect with the prefigurative culture characteristic of accelerationist capitalism in the sense of Nick Land (2019a); that is to say, a flow that, as Sanchiz (2020) defines it, is «absolute» in that it does not need a subject that does a particular thing; furthermore, this subject is also an epiphenomenon of acceleration. Consequently, the institution of educational confinement of docile bodies that functioned so well in terms of discipline starts to break up, albeit conserving a panoply of meanings that archive it in its rigidity and allow it to propagate political memes highlighting its topicality and excellence, even though they deny it a future.

Returning to Land's text (2019a), schooling stopped reproducing itself as a «hot culture» some time ago; in other words, as the adapting and innovative thing it was at the moment of the 17th century when it dissolved the cold order of the written to recycle it into a new mass logic. The school as a single text as it appeared in the 17th century as part of Gutenberg's revolution — from the *Orbis Sensualis Pictus* up to its great-great-great-grandchildren in the 20th century — was the spice of school culture: a written instrument with a linear approach that linked to the linearity and rhythm of the journey through school. In contrast, in digital culture, the offer is hypertextual with multiple interfaces that include the book but in an «electronic» format. It is this hot culture that has a destructive capability. It invades the once innovative classrooms that are divided into levels and are free to access and it dissolves not just that bookish linearity but also organisational linearity: strictly upholding modern school hierarchies under the digital yoke of the cross-linked organisation requires a counter cultural effort limited to small and isolated token successes, if not to the most absolute failure. A narcissistic undertaking that, as we will see below, anticipates a destiny of frustration.

Schooling as a power has cooled down and no longer subverts anything although it does produce a defensive symptomatology to protect itself from the hot attacks of the digital through remnants of an epic that can only be recited as a hoarse song to that which was, to what we would like it to be for ever. Although a trace of it remains that refuses to be posthumous and to which we pay homage. One we return to through nostalgic subterfuges to corroborate its ghostly aspect every day. And to which we become addicted as part of our identity, craving daily doses because we know abstinence will drive us mad or, worse still, will make us change.

An extra chemical attachment, albeit one that is neurologically detectable, that generates violent reactions when someone absent-mindedly dares, in his or her dark lucidity, to shake the barbiturate reverie of the powerful school by playing the sound of the last bells: these are the spectral patrols of modern pedagogy that — even

though they are lost — are strikingly abundant and respond with viscous and brutal virulence, identifying heresies and accusing heretics. Patrols that inhabit emotional greenhouses, in the sense of Koestler (2016), which even when run-down or in ruins conserve the warmth needed to continue to honour faith in the pedagogical utopia of modernity and anathematise any unbeliever who stands in the way. Patrols whose ideology is the least of it: they can belong to the old hierarchical and conservative order of the right or to the miserable left (in Land's sense, 2019b), both unable to stop clinging to the past. *E pur si muove*

This nostalgic mode involves the constant task of subordinating any variant of the new to conserving the old, something that is expressed in a technical approach, in the words of Jameson (2002). For a long time, pedagogy has only flown the flag of the utopia of the question of what-for, with which modernity challenged its time, and it calls on its old spirits when it feels threatened, but this state of alert is not its most frequent state.

In the limp ordinariness after the twelfth bell, pedagogy has abandoned any pretence at historical arrogance and has settled comfortably into the utopia of the question of how, attaching itself to the forms of the past (which are always questioned but never discontinued) to finally lament having opted for these doses of flattened practicality: if it is a matter of maximising results, celebrated economists will have to be more compliant than the pedagogical exegetes of a past that will not return and, where modest didactic prescriptions wither in their powerless lethargy, functions of educational production flourish that are ready to aid those who aspire to be non-improvised. Highly disciplined battalions of all-terrain psychometricians singing in harmony the triumphal hymn of the new heroes of recent victories of pure empiricism, new evidence-based saviours. The pedagogical dreams in which gentle melancholy invokes a technique numbed by the passage of time result in the worst of econometric nightmares, ones correlated with the hot culture of data.

Is this twelfth bell the final call at the end or might there be something else in its ringing? Something, despite everything, has remained open: a crack we uncomfortably inhabit but which makes it possible to value what is most prized.

2. WHO YOU GONNA CALL? GHOSTBUSTERS

Pedagogy's great ploy for contributing to its own survival is to take pansophy as a hostage of schooling; deciding that the technology must be preserved and so, dialectically, turning the means into ends. And it is so stubborn in this strategy that it will see the hostage die before it yields its stronghold.

In fact, for Comenius school technology was just one medium, among others, for attaining pansophy. As Jan Čížek (2019) notes, for Comenius there are great possibilities for everyone to attain wisdom about the world given that humankind

now shares much more knowledge thanks to the invention of the printing press and the flood of new schools where ordinary farmers and women to whom this access was previously denied could share in the knowledge other humans created. Schooling in Comenius is a pansophistic option, or, as he himself defined it, a method: a possible path but neither unique nor eternal.

Faced with this, the main virtue of current pedagogy of making the modern school survive over time is based on an erotic obstinacy bordering on manic compulsion. In effect, all of the libidinal cathexis is projected onto a single object: the school. And, as we said at the start, this idealisation is what makes it natural and immanent in itself: a displacement that puts all positive attributes into a single act and prevents negativisation of it in order to establish a distance, to disassociate oneself operationally from the object and see it through other eyes.

The fascination with schooling is so strong that it means that all of its contingent difficulties can be remedied in an act of negation typical of those obsessive loves that, with so many saccharine declamations and so much «defence» of their defects do no more than hide the compulsively narcissistic character of the projection. Coming out in defence of school means coming out in defence of an object, not a desire; it means invoking the ghosts of the glorious past to preserve a problematic present. Coming out in defence of school is simply coming out in our own defence, even though the pedagogical story feeds on a bountiful and altruistic aesthetic while nobody concerns themselves with pansophy, the main injured party.

Like any great narcissist, frustration does not affect it and reality is to blame for any problems as it does not adapt to the theory. Therefore, this processes of over reacting when encountering those who identify the weakness of the idealised self happens time and again. The more fragile it is, the more idealised, and so the greater the overreaction when encountering frustration. The egotistic profile of pedagogy, with its tendency to attribute all that is good to the school and distance all that is bad ends up distorting its sense of reality and, with the muffled echo of a choir of howling infinitives, achieves a transitory pyrrhic victory in which it perpetuates itself as it sees what gave it its primal meaning falter. And, like Narcissus, pedagogy is also drowning as it delights in its own reflection, even if its neurotic face makes itself up with a magical voluntarism that its narcissistic omnipotence guides into blind alleys with no satnav system to recalculate its route.

Like Fisher (2018), we can conclude that failures and frustrations, which we cannot hide from ourselves, turn themselves into a functional vector of capitalist realism: when it overflows anger, the narcissistic wound turns into depression and in it we live our final outcome, our socially required symptom: when the multiform racket dies down, when the tantrums calm, when the accusations turn out to be insignificant, this is where we see ourselves as being solely responsible for our misery and, consequently, as being worthy of it.

Being a ghostbuster of schooling involves the task of identifying the erotic nuclei set in motion by the narcissistic drive and valuing them, freeing them from being detained through unreflecting praise for schooling. Although it is not nostalgic — simultaneously anti-nostalgic — this operation is also historical, with a backbone that leans forwards more than backwards, or according to Galliano (2018),

There are pockets of futurism in the past that can be exploited to conceptualise alternative presents without the need for nostalgia or alienation (...it is a matter of) activating these pockets of past futurism not as nostalgia, but as a lack, an uncomfortable noise that can have a subversive effect on the current political rigidity.

This lack is the hostage. Schooling emerged in the 17th century as a technology for reunifying what writing had separated and consolidating a society in which all of human knowledge is for all human beings. This vision between encyclopaedic and neo-stoic, in Hamilton's reading (1992), fitted in with the modern project, but this was unable to realise the vision. The power of pansophy far exceeds the enlightened ideal and makes it possible to understand conventional forms of social relationship, as Ivan Illich explains very well (Narodowski, 2017). Schooling, then, was not an end in itself but merely a tool for pansophy... it is vital to understand that the depressive logic of praising schooling by exhuming its cadavers reinforces the impossibility of real capitalism imposing pansophy.

A well-practised exorcism will be able to cast the most attractive demons out from schooling, in the knowledge that in that expulsion the school will probably die in the best possible way: bearing its name with dignity, even if, like the ship *Argos*, its constituent parts are completely different from the original ones. The school we knew included the infinite knowables of modernity. Now overwhelmed, new infinities hope to help it pass to a better life so that they can be included pansophically. This gaze, therefore, is not «pessimistic» only because it does not inscribe itself in the nostalgia for the school and did not in this way develop stubbornly as a string of self-indulgent meanings. Although it is undoubtedly sceptical, it positions itself setting out to release the pansophic ideal from subjection to a single educational format and, therefore, proposes an outlook when faced with the current crisis.

With this manoeuvre more distant from pain and compassionate shame than from a challenging proactive euthanasia, we will be able to choose mechanisms of schooling without muddying ourselves in its grammar. We will be able to allow ourselves to be seduced by the uncomfortable noise of its mismatch and submit to the frenzy of the unknown. We will be able to defile its rituals without fear of punishment. We will be able to take control of its routines, mix them, tune them, randomise them. We will be able to intrude into its symbolic spaces as well as its physical ones, occupy them, cleanse them of bureaucracies. We will be able to hack it (even if this verb is overused), interfere in its systems and take control of some

of its clusters. We will be able to try it, pick through its rubbish, find what is of value in it. We will be able to remove its tumour or at least make it asymptomatic. We will, wholly or in parts, be able to maintain this pseudo-programme against the neo-discipline of corporations and re-modernising and transhumanist aims. Will we manage?

We will be able to use some of its modules, as well as many others that are typical of digital culture, in a Schumpeterian process of creative destruction that neo-unhindered capitalism has denied schooling for some time, obliging us to live on its memories, its ghosts, the scraps from its stale banquet.

The libidinal object to be *catbexticised*, desire, is not the method but its aim: the former is changeable, contingent, à la carte... they are objects; the latter are strategic and correspond with what we can love. Fetishism is not recommended, not even for the school or its ghosts, just as, to contradict Roger Taylor (Queen, 1975), falling in love with your car is not advisable.

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