

**Innate Morality vs. Indoctrinated Righteousness:
A Challenge of Choices for Learning Societies**
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“If you assume that there is no hope, you guarantee that there will be no hope. If you assume that there is an instinct for freedom, that there are opportunities to change things, there is a possibility that you can contribute to making a better world. That’s your choice.”

— Noam Chomsky

It is ironic that we are trying to spark a discourse on regenerating societal learning, while living in an age of gigabytes of data and information, global media and western-style schooling. These spaces/sources are considered by many to be the most advanced means for democratizing knowledge acquisition and learning opportunities. In fact, a number of highly educated people around the world claim that we have never been as free and knowledgeable as we are today, and that we owe all our progress to institutions like these. This paper is aimed at exposing the [deliberate] naïveté of such claims.

I seek to argue that the institutions of global media and universal schooling (and now, more recently, information and communication technology) work in sync to subvert and/or annihilate challenging and provocative learning processes — especially those which may expose the functioning of the most unjust world that human history has ever encountered. In this age of monumental repression, these institutions are given the complex and critical task of thought-control. Thought-control is crucial for illegitimate political and economic systems to pillage the Earth and humanity on a global scale, as any efforts that might challenge authority and domination must be continuously marginalized and destroyed. This task is performed through a variety of strategies, aimed at filtering out independence of thought, creativity and imagination and fostering, in their place, obedience, apathy and impotence.

The key to their success lies in presenting unabashed indoctrination as learning, and brazen deceit as the gospel truth. The managers of these abusive institutions are tasked with manipulating the meaning of morality, not only to mitigate the possibilities of revolt by the oppressed, but also to pacify their own basic human sensibilities. In this way, any ‘annoying’ agitation of conscience is remolded to serve elite interests and systems.

Unjust and exploitative power structures are faced with the perennial threat of the ‘unruly masses’ and those who attempt to nurture various modes of societal learning among them. In ancient times, for example, prophets were frequently banished to deserts for the unpardonable crime of generating consciousness and awareness amongst the poor and oppressed. They grounded their work in the basic assumption that every human being has powerful instincts to be free, creative and, above all, to be conscientious and moral. And they understood that tyranny is most naturally challenged, not by framing complicated socioeconomic scenarios, but by regenerating human beings’ profound instinct to reflect on and understand the wrongs of oppression.

I believe that the concept of learning societies is based on creating spaces and communities, which allow all individuals to realize and actualize these instincts in their own ways. Through the revival of diverse, constructive and critical learning processes, people will be able to resist and challenge structures of power and abuse. With the increasing authority and reach of the state-wealth nexus, this struggle for regenerating dynamic and purposeful societal learning becomes more difficult, but even more crucial for life on this planet.

In this article, I seek to unmask these so-called institutions of learning and to identify the possibilities for rejuvenating real learning societies. To do so, I will discuss the evolution of contemporary institutions of thought-control — a five-century old unrelenting assault on human sensibilities, sensitivities, and moralities that tries to

wrap itself in a cloak of ‘moral goodness’. This assault began with genocide in three continents and the enslavement of the rest of the world during the ‘romantic’ epoch of the European Renaissance. Later, the bastion of fake scientific knowledge was used to further institutionalize tyranny. Now the latest drive for this juggernaut of destruction has been to enslave, impoverish and devour humanity in the name of freedom, prosperity and human rights. In each of these three stages, I will highlight how these crimes have been framed (and are still being framed) on moral grounds. I conclude by discussing the principal task in today’s world: to liberate our individual and collective innate moral instincts. I will point to some sources of inspiration in this struggle, which has now become the struggle for survival for humankind.

Before proceeding, it is important to note that these stages of genocide and racism, scientific intellectualization, and free-market/technology/democracy façades are all intertwined within the leading institutions of power in today’s world and are manifest in these institutions’ perceptions and expressions. I should clarify that it is not that these vile forces did not exist before the European invasion of the world. However, they have gained entirely new dimensions and new significance in the contemporary imperialist context.

Grappling with the Grand Inquisitor

For the architects of thought-control institutions, one symbol of inspiration would be the Grand Inquisitor, a character invented by Russian author, Fyodor Dostoyevsky.¹ The Grand Inquisitor bitterly assailed Jesus Christ for offering people freedom. “Freedom for common people,” he declared, “was a sentence to misery.” He explained that the Church must correct the work of Christ by offering the miserable masses of humanity the gift they most need: **absolute submission**. The Grand Inquisitor proclaimed that the Church must “vanquish freedom” so as to make men “happy” and provide the total “community of worship” that they avidly seek.

An analysis of human history would reveal that this conflict — between the conjurers of total submission and passivity versus the invokers of freedom of thought and questioning — has taken various forms. In the modern secular age, for example, one would translate the Grand Inquisitor’s doctrine as ‘submission to the Masters of insatiable greed and unending profits.’ Today’s Church is Big Business and its henchmen, eagerly supplied by the Nation-State, are under strict orders to keep the masses under control — by any means necessary. While the Grand Inquisitor employed the twin forces of miracle and mystery to assert his authority over “the conscience of these impotent rebels”, these protégés of the Grand Inquisitor use the international development enterprise, compulsory schooling and hi-tech global media to glorify submission and make people fear and despise the idea of free thinking. These gifts of progress, with the beautiful labels of ‘development’, ‘education’ and ‘information’ have appeared to baffle the masses more than the miracles of the Grand Inquisitor. The subjects (most of humanity) are sermonized endlessly through trillion dollar networks of development (IMF, the World Bank, United Nations and their NGO cronies)² and ‘free media’ (CNN, STAR)³ about how wonderful it is to become a cog in the wheel of the insatiable corporate wealth. Indeed, it is promised that the path of privatization and liberalization will earn all of us a berth in the coveted rocket ship of ‘progress’.

Instead of the Church clergy, there is fiercely loyal, obedient and conformist intelligentsia of social theorists, behavioral psychologists, and educationists to serve as managers of this task. Their job has been to concoct universalistic theories⁴ (a.k.a. ‘best practices’) on human nature, human behavior and human societies. These theories are then used to spawn potent and pervasive processes of thought-control and to promote plunder and injustice. The fruits of these ceaseless efforts can be witnessed in the burgeoning of corporate wealth (the top 100 billionaires of the world have more wealth than four billion people combined), along with the disappearance of hundreds of millions of people into the black holes of abject poverty.

At the same time, these self-proclaimed custodians of humanity fulfill the System’s need to beguile and obscure meaningful societal learning processes. They accomplish this in two ways. First, they throw certain perks and bribes at select portions of their subjects (the middle class) to make sure they are happy and willing accomplices in these crimes of colossal proportions. However, there is always a risk with this strategy: that these people (and others) may actually

begin to listen to their conscience and reject these corrupt and unjust institutions.⁵ Therefore, in order to co-opt the innate soundness of conscience, intellectual propagandists employ a second strategy of promoting intoxicating nationalistic slogans, like “the enlightenment of the beasts,” “the march of civilization,” “for the greater common good” and more recently “leapfrogging development”. Such moralizing language has been used to nullify personal and collective instincts of critical reflection and honest reasoning and to justify in their place:

- the killing of the indigenous peoples of the Americas (for their own good);
- the enslaving of Africans (to civilize them);
- trickle-down economics (the poor will benefit when the rich getting richer);
- the Holocaust (to defend Germans from the Jewish attack);
- the pulverizing of tiny countries such as Vietnam, Laos and Nicaragua (to alleviate threats to a sadistic US superpower’s national security).

In the following sections, I will highlight the key intellectual and moral rationalizations for genocide/slavery/colonialism, social engineering, development and globalization. These justifications form the foundations of the ‘modern and civilized’ world.

Stage 1: The ‘Glories’ of Genocide, Slavery and Colonialism

The first episode of the bloodiest era of human history wiped out the inhabitants of two continents (North and South America) and enslaved the inhabitants of two others (Africa and most of Asia). These actions were boosted by moral justifications like the following:

“The native America was physically and psychically powerless, its culture so limited that it must expire as soon as the Higher Spirit [the Europeans] approached it, hence the aborigines gradually vanished at the breath of European activity. They were inferior even to the Negro, who is beyond any thought of reverence and morality — all that we call feeling. Among Negroes, slavery is an occasion of the increase of human feeling, enabling them to become a participant in a higher morality and the culture connected with it.”⁶

Such uplifting and righteous thoughts were a shot of adrenaline for anyone who might have felt weighed down by the murders of tens of millions of indigenous peoples (almost 200 million, just in the Americas, during the first 300 years of the Columbus-led invasion). The belief that they were carrying out the will of God probably also calmed the conscience of those who stuffed the bottom decks of slave ships with very profitable human cargo, which was frequently dumped in the ocean in the event of a storm. One estimate suggests that two-thirds of the population of West and Central Africa perished during the 17th and 18th century.⁷

Even more disturbing is the fact that this dance of naked racism and brutal savagery was performed during the peak centuries of the European Renaissance, the self-proclaimed height of philosophical learning and reflective self-awareness in the West. The beautiful aesthetic façades of Leonardo da Vinci and William Shakespeare were ideal cover-ups for the real ‘masters’ of that period: the warrior-merchants, such as Lord Clive and Duke Nelson, who competed to see who could loot and ravage the most. “The English operation was a predatory drive of armed traders and marauders to win a share of the Atlantic wealth of the Iberian nations [Spain and Portugal]. It continued a strong European tradition of the union of warfare and trade, as the European state’s growth as a military enterprise gave rise to the quintessentially European figure of the warrior-merchant.”⁸

The warrior-merchant had a strong disdain for any form of societal learning and reflective discourse that did not promote the art of piracy, the expertise in extermination, and the total servitude to murderous masters. The following observations of Lord Macaulay, the architect of colonial schooling system in India, demonstrates this scorn for any other way of understanding the world:

“I have no knowledge of Arabic or Sanskrit... but I think that a single shelf of a good European library is worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia. It is, I believe, no exaggeration to say, that all the historical information which has been collected

from all the books written in the Sanskrit language is less valuable than what may be found in the most paltry abridgements written in English.”⁹

With such kind deliberations, two of the most advanced cultures of human history were dismissed into nothingness.

In their place, Macaulay suggested a monolithic institution of calculated indoctrination: the schooling system. He stated, “*We must do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and color, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect.*” Today, this could be loosely translated as: “It will be useful to have a group of locals, or ‘native’ collaborators, to micromanage matters of our concern, to assist us in pillaging countries, and to celebrate the glories of the mighty empire.” An eerie similarity can be drawn between this sentiment and the IMF’s, World Bank’s and UN agencies’ more recent, politically-correct calls for “capacity building” and “human resource development”.

Not only would these newly-created interpreters ensure the reign of the colonizers, but they would also perform the important task of ‘educating’ the masses. Such education would mitigate the annoying tendencies of the natives to spark their own societal discourses and struggles for freedom. It would also make them totally dependent on their masters for administration, justice, technology and modes of expression.

In this way, the brigade of interpreters — Renaissance and Enlightenment philosophers, colonial managers, and educated natives — combined effectively with ruthless conquering militaries to eradicate the most immediate threats of internal societal reflection. And the effects of these doctrines have lasted a long time. Although now covered by a veil of political correctness (in which phrases like “killing Indians for their own good” or “enslaving Negroes to civilize them” can no longer be openly articulated), these beliefs are still deeply rooted in today’s socio-economic and political institutions. They have been furthered by a second stage of intellectual sponsorship: the rise of social sciences.

Stage 2: The Benevolence of Social Engineering

Having already spread the ideology of ‘survival of the fittest’ in the 19th century, science and rationality brought forth another wave of theories to morally justify vicious crimes against humanity. These theories at controlling and regimenting societal learning by restructuring human nature and interactions. Armed with powerful ‘science’ (i.e., information on the behaviors of rats, dogs and pigeons), the elite had the ammunition to carry out wide-scale social engineering, first in their own societies and then among colonized populations. In fact, behaviorism¹⁰ provided the perfect intellectual and moral justification for indoctrinating people and exterminating their [inferior] local cultural environments.

Although popular, fascist and racist doctrines became increasingly hard to assert, without tarnishing the benevolent image of the masters of the world. Luckily, behaviorist and similar ‘cognitive’ theories arrived at the right time, to cloak these doctrines of control in ‘neutral’ and ‘objective’ robes. Their argument went something like this: People do not have an intrinsic nature; they do not know what is good or bad. They are only a product of their surroundings, which shapes their behavior through a system of rewards and punishments. If they do the right thing, they are rewarded; if they do not, they are punished. This is how they learn to behave in society. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the managers to use the latest behavioral techniques to ‘socialize’ them, to ‘modernize’ them, in order to ensure harmony in society. Of course, by some miracle of God, these managers and their Masters do not suffer from this human condition of infinite malleability; they have an intrinsic moral nature and understand what is good and bad. That is why it is their duty to take care of the rest of us poor, ignorant and powerless slobs (roughly 80% of the world’s population).

Not surprisingly, this strain of thought became very popular among the managerial classes. With the growth of modern economic institutions, the need to manage people for greater efficiency and profit had grown tremendously. It was important that the right 'work ethic' and modern industrial values be instilled in the masses. To further cement their control, there was also a need to shift people's loyalties, away from family and community and towards the state-wealth nexus.¹¹

The best place to start was with children ("Catch them young!"). So the school was selected as the leading institution, the breeding ground, for applying Watson and Skinner's¹² ideas to humans. Teachers and educators were enthralled with the prospect of receiving 'empty vessels', whom they could fill with 'pearls of knowledge and wisdom' and make into 'real men' to serve the industrial-military machine. They would control children by dangling the merits of high grades or the scorn of failure in front of them. In this way, during the most stimulating time of their lives, children would be reduced to mimicking and memorizing machines, overflowing with fear and insecurity. The reach of this dehumanizing framework — of reducing human beings to circus animals — has been so pervasive that we no longer notice it. Alfie Kohn refers to it as "pop behaviorism", where the system of rewards and punishment is used for everything from raising children to managing employees.¹³

The grand-scale destruction of WWI and WWII temporarily weakened the agenda of social engineering, which allowed societal learning to generate some collective consciousness and radical democratic ideas about self-rule and equitable distribution. The freedom struggles in many countries received great strength and direction from this. However, the elite around the world was appalled by these trends of people wanting to be free and the threat that this posed to their global empire. Almost immediately, they planned a great cohesive drive to reverse this tide. As was noted by the Journal of American Business in 1947, the elite would have to fight "the everlasting battle for the minds of men, and indoctrinate citizens with the capitalist story" until "they are able to play back the story with remarkable fidelity." This marks the third (and current) stage of this horrifying sequence of history.

Stage 3: The Sophistication of Sophistry¹⁴

Building upon the strong moral foundations of genocide, slavery and colonialism and social engineering, we have now reached the age of convoluted conglomerates: the global media and the worldwide development industry. This one-two punch of utter deceit and corruption combines with the impenetrable façades of truth, righteousness, progress, human rights, democracy, and freedom. Dropping napalm bombs on faraway, tiny nations to 'keep democracy safe', strangulating millions with sanctions, and using structural adjustment policies to devour resources in the shortest possible time, are some of the usual tasks undertaken by the 'defenders of freedom'. Exemption from challenge or societal reflection is guaranteed by, what Noam Chomsky calls, the enforcement of certain "necessary illusions".¹⁵

The school and the media, particularly newspapers and television, serve to propagate these necessary illusions and also control the space, spectrum and content of societal dialogue and reflections. For example, within this spectrum, democracy means 'reinforcing the State's will'. The noblest of causes therefore is to suffer for the betterment of the Nation, whether by giving one's life in a war or by giving one's homeland for hydroelectric dams.¹⁶ Similarly, progress is equated with 'fueling economic growth' and the only viable human pursuit is towards material gain and insatiable consumption and accumulation. Any societal discourse that stays safely within these boundaries is permitted and protected as 'free speech'. Anyone who dares to challenge the shackles of bondage and tries to realize his/her innate spirit for creativity, freedom and purposeful learning will have to be hammered into submission. And if this human spirit spirals out of control to a sizable degree, there can be an outright assault, wars of terror and/or genocide. Many peoples of the world are all too familiar with the grisly consequences of recapturing and regenerating liberatory societal learning.¹⁷ Notably, when societies and individuals capitulate to the interests of powerful and wealthy, they are labeled as 'advanced capitalist societies' and sold as models to be replicated by all.¹⁸

Schools and global media, armed with the visions of nation-building, modernization, free market democracy, operate with fierce loyalty to protect and promote the values of these socially,

morally, economically and ecologically devastating systems. Competition, merit, and choices are the myths erected for the schooled masses; daily recitation of national anthems and endless drills to learn English grammar are the hallmarks of a good day in school. Twelve years of this, and an ideal citizen — living a life of complete subordination and devoid of the will or ways to challenge global plunder — is produced. The extent of colonization can be witnessed by the fact that the proudest schools in South Asia are the ones that claim affiliations with a 'parent' institution in the Euro-American world, such as Cambridge, Oxford, or Harvard.

Yet, there are gaps in this strategy. Many human beings refuse to be 'good students'. The task of filling the gaps and fostering submission, in the absence of school, is taken over by the other major player in this game, the 'free media'. Media analyst Noam Chomsky explains this:

"People must be kept that way, diverted with emotionally potent oversimplifications (national security, religious pride), marginalized, and isolated. Ideally, each person should be alone in front of the television screen, watching sports, soap operas, or comedies. They should be deprived of organizational structures that permit individuals, who lack resources to discover what they think and believe in, to interact with others, to formulate their own concerns and programs, and to act to realize them. This multitude is the target of mass media and an education system which is geared to obedience and training in needed skills, including the skill of patriotic slogans on timely occasions." ¹⁹

The 'Morality' of Deceit

Despite frank acknowledgments by gurus and architects like Lord Macaulay, B.F. Skinner, and Harold Lasswell, it would be erroneous to suppose that most interpreters engage in 'conscious' deceit; few reach the level of sophistication of Dostoyevsky's Grand Inquisitor. On the contrary, as intellectuals pursue their grim and demanding vocation, they seem to readily adopt beliefs that serve the larger institutional needs. Indeed, the most disturbing part of such moral justifications is that they are often 'sincere' — the chairman of the board or the president of a global bank may sincerely believe that his every waking moment is dedicated to serving humanity.²⁰ Of course, were he to seriously act on these delusions, instead of pursuing profit and a greater market share, he would no longer be chairman or president. It is probable that even the most inhumane monsters, from Hitler to George Bush,²¹ convince themselves that they are engaged in noble and courageous acts.

When these institutions and values of absolute power and domination go blatantly berserk on innocent people, then the thought-control agencies are called in to perform much-needed damage control. Public Relations people are called in to divert public attention away from inherently corrupt institutional frameworks and on to the personality defects of leaders, who have overtly strayed from sophisticated sophistry.²² So those who were once "our kind of guys"²³ like Suharto, Saddam, Noriega or Pinochet, suddenly become 'monstrous dictators' — of course, only after they have duly performed their jobs to murder and plunder their own peoples. The task of the Free Press, in such circumstances, is to pay rich tribute to the openness and self-correcting nature of Western institutions. Emotionally-charged exposés, like Watergate or Tehelka.com, allow the media and the 'educated' classes to fulfill their societal responsibility and prevent any deeper public scrutiny of larger systems of control. They take the self-proclaimed position of 'interpreters' to simplify complex issues for the ignorant masses. The moral bankruptcy of the very nature of institutions of power is never a matter of concern; it is just a temporary dysfunction of some ex-darling leader, who may have fallen out of favor for getting too greedy and disobeying some orders. For example, Saddam Hussein can gas as many Kurds and Iranians as he may like (in 1988) but the invasion of a debauched oil rich sheikhdom (in 1990) is a crime against the Western economic interest not to be tolerated.

These are some highlights of the painful methodologies used in a five-century-old concerted effort to justify inhumane and murderous actions and create a global network of control and

coercion. Of course, at the flip side of this sheer ruthlessness is a remarkable continuum of the struggle for human dignity. The resolute human spirit, which over the centuries has refused to submit completely to the torture of tyranny, offers us the best source of hope for the future.

The Pedagogy of Hope

Antonio Gramsci, the theorist who is widely credited with framing the notion of hegemony, once said that the “pessimism of intellect should be balanced by the optimism of will.”²⁴ In other words, a deep and thorough analysis of the current context should be followed by faith in and hope for change. The long history of suppressing human freedom has a series of glittering examples of resistance and reclamation of dignity. These examples range from the battles against colonial invasion to profound provocation against the instruments of indoctrination. In our age, a number of thinkers, leaders and activists like Gandhi, Iqbal, Tagore, Ali Shariati, and Edward Said represent the morality of our spirit and its instinct to liberate itself from forced domination. Creativity, organic learning, individual and collective consciousness form the core of optimism and fuel the struggles to challenge the forces of moralized evil. As Iqbal describes, “consciousness is the towering testament to the nobility of being human, which leads to an existence of disdain for materialism and to a genuine concern for others.”²⁵

Thinkers like Tagore, Iqbal and Gandhi sought to raise intellectual questions on the basis of a shared morality and consciousness. Their questions were simple and poignant; they articulated the will of countless sufferers by addressing issues like: the inhuman categorizations of people, the rights to privilege, the self-proclaimed superiority of western values, functional inequality, the quest for greed, the concentration of power and wealth, morally and environmentally abusive consumerism, and the value of each human soul. Perhaps it is for this reason that, despite the seductive power of media or the indoctrination of state schools — which have tried to devalue or confuse their messages — these thinkers are still able to generate an enormous response from people. Such a response provides indisputable evidence of the kind of organic and reflexive societal learning that can take place, regardless of relentless assaults from the managers and their instruments of thought-control.

The processes generated by raising such questions have galvanized many cultures and civilizations to respect, value and regenerate a democratic learning spirit, to understand the mechanisms of exploitation and to construct a challenge based on the principles of morality and justice. They have shaken the foundations of tyranny, by exposing the rhetoric of systems of abuse, by throwing real light on their false projection of themselves as righteous and fair. A recent effort in this direction can be found in the Iranian Revolution, which was highly demonized by the global media. Ali Shariati’s emphasis on conceptualizing spirituality, to reclaim the moral roots of a civilization, created the foundation for a longstanding struggle against tyrant rulers in Iran. This struggle was nurtured in the indigenous, voluntary and spiritually-motivated spaces for dialogue and reflection. The moral anchors for such dialogue were the spirits of *Haq* (‘truth’ in Arabic), *Sabr* (‘tolerance’) and sacrifice, which are required to defend these ideals. Such discourse provides the ground for these values to be actualized in an individual, and for a society to liberate itself from the fundamental immorality of the abuse of power. In a similar vein, Edward Said emphasizes the role popular insurrection plays to challenge the ruthless oppressors of Palestinians. Such uprisings of peoples represent the unflinching struggle of human spirit to de-legitimize brutal military occupation, regardless of the massive global propaganda and thought-control by Israel and the United States.

Fostering the Optimism of Will

In spaces like the Institute for Development Studies and Practices, in Quetta, Pakistan, we also are engaged in processes of creating public ownership of profound thoughts and ideals, which have emerged over the course of history, through arduous sacrifices and struggles for liberation. These are not the creation of any one mind or leader

but grow out of the most fundamental collective efforts of humanity. At the IDSP, we invite a group of indigenous community members and workers to share in a process of generative learning. Over the course of six months, we work together to unravel the complexity of our repression (in which we often play the critical role of confused accomplices). One of our most concerted processes is to deconstruct the myths of Education, the State, Progress, and Modernization. These are exposed from different perspectives and highlight the relationship between the Masters and the masses.

We then develop local contexts and applications to counter dominant institutions and systems. For example, in many areas IDSP learners are engaging their communities to revive spaces for collective dialogue and cultural production, which are currently being ravaged by the invasion of state structures and of sensational media.²⁶ One learner has motivated a group of young girls to reflect on and understand the empowering role of women in an oppressed society. They have launched a serious challenge to a powerful NGO working for women's rights, who is projecting an image of women as baby-makers. These girls use activist and politically charged female icons of Islamic history, who had been instrumental in challenging injustice and the abuse of power (like Zainab, the Prophet's granddaughter), as their reference points of learning. A different group of IDSP activists is engaged in reviving the local Baluchi traditions of societal dialogue and cooperation for collective learning. Such dialogues include discussion on common practices and their merits or demerits, purely on the bases of morality and spiritual traditions. Recently, these villagers opposed nuclear testing in Baluchistan, as a ghastly inhuman and immoral act, regardless of the state propaganda of the revered "Islamic Bomb."

One of the most frequent focus areas of these activities is the revival of rich local literary and language traditions. Sub-continent civilization is unparalleled in terms of the richness and symbiosis of its art and its spiritual and morally uplifting themes. Groups are engaged in bringing young people together to understand and value the masterpieces of articulation and expression, which combine the rhythms of language and sound with the profound messages of human dignity and moral uprightness. They are initiating a large-scale research project of emphasizing the philosophical (and liberatory) commonalities in the thoughts of the great literary figures of the South Asian civilization, like Tagore, Hafiz, Ghalib, and Iqbal. Such efforts are critical in reviving not only the priceless models of creativity and aesthetic brilliance, but to highlight the fact that these thinkers ceaselessly emphasized the construction of societies on the principles of morality, selflessness, love and passion for justice.

In conclusion, I must clarify that the struggle between justice and tyranny cannot and should not be reduced to 'rich vs. poor' or 'white vs. black' or even, for that matter, 'west vs. east'. This has happened in the past and is an extreme detriment to furthering dialogues. Instead, the key to understanding monumental injustice is knowledge of the 'hows', the mechanisms that subjugate and bewilder the innate moral instincts in all of us. This critical awareness underscores the most important course of future actions: to develop reflections and capacities for communities around the world to engage in serious institutional analyses, which penetrate into the very core of our daily lives. Nurturing such understandings, which unravel the elite's myths and deceitful claims to righteousness, is the most critical step towards launching serious global challenge to despotic control. This challenge is always there in the simple, and yet profound, moral capacity of all of our beings, which once liberated from the yokes of control, manipulation and indoctrination, presents a promise of reflective learning societies.

Endnotes

¹ The Grand Inquisitor appears in Fyodor Dostoyevsky's The Brothers Karamazov.

² See G. Hancock. Lords of Poverty: The Power, Prestige, and Corruption of the International Aid Business. New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1989.

³ See E. Herman and R. McChesney. The Global Media: The New Missionaries of Corporate Capitalism. Delhi: Madhyam Books, 1998.

⁴ Excerpts from the leading intellectual discourse [which protected slavery and genocide, as a "natural course of human progress"] of Renaissance Europe are included in this article. With the consolidation of academic

institutions and fraud in the social sciences, the free market, meritocracy, survival of the fittest, and depravity of human beings were all widely promoted as the columns of modern social construction.

⁵ See, for examples, the life and work of Che Guevara, Frantz Fanon, M.K. Gandhi, and other middle-class people who broke from the 'party line'.

⁶ Friedrich Hegel is quoted in Noam Chomsky, Year 501: The Conquest Continues. Cambridge: South End Press, 1993.

⁷ Eduardo Galeano. Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent. London: Latin American Bureau, 1997 edition.

⁸ Cited in Noam Chomsky, Year 501: The Conquest Continues. Cambridge: South End Press, 1993.

⁹ T. B. Macaulay, "Minute of Education in India," 1835.

¹⁰ Psychological theory that human beings can be controlled by a system of rewards and punishments, since at their core, their only motivation is gain of wealth.

¹¹ See John Taylor Gatto's "The Public School Nightmare: Why Fix a System Designed to Destroy Individual Thought?" in Matt Hern, Ed., Deschooling Our Lives. Canada: New Society Publishers, 1996.

¹² Leading behaviorists of the early- and mid-20th century.

¹³ Alfie Kohn, Punished by Rewards: The Trouble with Gold Stars, Incentive Plans, A's, Praise, and Other Bribes. New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1993

¹⁴ Sophistry can be defined as "tricky reasoning" or "delusion".

¹⁵ Noam Chomsky. Necessary Illusions: Thought Control in Democratic Societies. USA: Pluto Press, 1989.

¹⁶ See Arundhati Roy. The Greater Common Good. Bombay: IndiaBook Distributors, 1999.

¹⁷ During the last five decades, in Central America, South America, Africa, the Middle East, and the Far East, almost six million people have been murdered, either directly by US and Western European armies or by their sponsorship. They all shared one 'crime': wanting to own their lives and their resources. Tiny countries like Laos/Nicaragua committed the sin of organizing landless peasants to challenge brutal dictatorship and elite rule. What followed was decades of terror and virtual genocide orchestrated by the torchbearers of democracy.

¹⁸ Israel, Taiwan, Korea, Singapore, South Africa are some examples of 'advanced capitalist societies.'

¹⁹ See Noam Chomsky. Deterring Democracy. New York: Hill and Wang, 1992.

²⁰ As James Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank, wrote in a recent letter to the citizens of Udaipur (who had demanded that the World Bank 'Quit India'): "Development is neither easy nor accepted by all, as it brings with greater integration in the world economy and entails changes in valuable and cherished traditions, and weakening of century-old institutions... We receive many expressions of support and encouragement for helping to bring prosperity and palpable improvements into the life of people... I hope [World Bank documents] will persuade you of the sincerity of our efforts in supporting governments that are thriving to improve the living standards of their people."

²¹ George Bush Sr. was president of the CIA for several years and later president of the US, when he ordered the decimation of Iraq. 10,000 people continue to die every day as the after-effect of his orders in 1992 according to a study of a coalition of human rights NGOs.

²² The July 1999 issue of The New Internationalist (No.314) exposes "Propaganda." It has an excellent article on the Public Relations industry that describes the lies they use to protect the corporate machine.

²³ The US Secretary of State called Suharto "our kind of guy," after his bloody takeover of Indonesia in a violent military coup.

²⁴ Antonio Gramsci is quoted in Eqbal Ahmad: Confronting Empire: Interviews with David Barsamian. Cambridge: South End Press, 2000.

²⁵ See Iqbal's *Zarb-e-Kaleem*.

²⁶ By sensational media, I refer to the proliferation of mindless, cheap game shows, singing competitions, dance competitions, soap operas, etc. that copy the West.

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