

A Review of the School-Community Relation:
Augusto Salazar Bondy and Nuclearization¹

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THE MEANING OF EDUCATION

Who would put into question the existence or even the importance of what we call education? It is something taken for granted, which must happen because that is just how things are. It would seem that education has gone through the process of its own naturalization, which has established an imperative need to answer the question on *how to educate*, forgetting not only to answer but also to ask other preliminary questions surrounding the meanings of educating.² Without a doubt, taking these steps backwards leads us to face education from a philosophical perspective. In this regard, we would like to recover Augusto Salazar Bondy's character, a Peruvian philosopher and educator, in order to ponder some of the meanings of education and the relations between school and community, starting from the educative-programmatic project of the 1972 Education Reform and, at the same time, to carry out a review of his proposals, from the point of view of some contemporary accounts on what *making school* means.

What defines the nature of education? According to Salazar Bondy, education is paradigmatic of the social fact, since it cannot be understood but within a historic-cultural context.³ It is a social act because it involves the interaction of subjects susceptible to changes in their way of being, namely, an interhuman fact, whose actors are primarily identified as educators and students.⁴ Likewise, another key aspect which makes

education such is that it enables reciprocity between actors, allowing the interchanging of roles between the ones educating and the ones being educated. However, it is not any kind of social interaction; it is important to think about the direction towards which these actions and potential changes point, as well as the educator's awareness and purposes. In this sense, education is a teleologically oriented process, in as much as the changes generated in the individual must aim at benefiting them by contributing to their development as persons, since they are not limited to the mere reproduction of what has been already learned, but also manipulate, transform, and create knowledge.

According to what has been previously said, the social character of education cannot be evaded, not only because it implies the interaction between subjects, but also the socialization given in education consists, mainly, of a process that should allow for people to become active agents that take part in changing society. One way or another, according to Salazar Bondy's consideration, education involves integrating the objective dimension of culture, related to the community's system of life, with the subjective dimension, i.e., the person's cultivation.⁵ Here we could also think about a conception of education that recovers the term's old meaning: *e-ducation*, from latin *e-ducere*, which has to do with leading outside, to the exterior, the public space.⁶ The relation between education and society pointed out by Salazar Bondy manifests itself in its public character, in as much as it brings into play an *image of the world* and exposes it to the students, seeking to study and think about better ways for things to be.⁷

PERU'S 1972 EDUCATION REFORM

Salazar Bondy's account on education is imprinted in the ethos of Peru's 1972 Education Reform. Although he was initially invited to take part as a member of the commission in charge, he would later take

on its presidency.⁸ Said Reform is one of the most ambitious, transformative processes with the widest political-social scope of Peru's and even Latin America's 20th century history.⁹ Thereby, it cannot be understood isolated from other reforms and their effects on society. In the Reform's project, Salazar Bondy sets forth a different way of conceiving education, not only in terms of educating individuals but also regarding the place it holds (or should hold) in society and its development.

Certainly, educative action is an essential feature in promoting social change, without it, it is impossible to break down the structures of domination set up in the social order. Nevertheless, school alone cannot carry all the weight of such social transformation, which must be accompanied by other changes in the collective the school is a part of.¹⁰

Salazar Bondy's position is clear: education cannot be the country's salvation. According to him, the idea that education can solve social, historic, and structural problems was only a way to further perpetuate them. Hence, this new education had to answer the country's historic-social situation.

The Education Reform had as its goal to uphold the structural and social changes caused by the Land Reform. The new education had to break with institutional education, which did not seek to bring about changes but to preserve certain morality and the *status quo* of the dominating classes.¹¹ The humanist approach that dwells within the Education Reform aims at sustaining said change. Humanist education, that is, authentic education according to Salazar Bondy, "is personalization, affirmation and the enriching of the most proper and original of the whole man and all men. Personalization is contrary to reification, which then turns out to be the opposite of education."¹²

According to Salazar Bondy, humanization is achieved by work, and that is why "we educate and must educate always at work, by work

and for work. But it is about free and liberating work, not alienated or commodified work, which, consequently, serves as an instrument of human subjection.”¹³

Taken beyond its economical dimension, work is an encounter with the creative capacity of man, the independence one can have over one's own practice, *being capable of*. This conception of work, the humanistic spirit of the Reform, seeks to avoid that education “becomes a form of specific training, learning, or learning to learn”, which would describe the technical education of workers instead of citizens.¹⁴ Rather, the humanistic approach transforms this work exercise in formation. By which we would not be referring to a utilitarian, pragmatist, or technical school, but rather to the work of life in society itself made into a school, since there can be no school outside social life.¹⁵ Namely, “The school, we might say, is preparation for the sake of preparation. This scholastic preparation means that young people ‘*come into their form*’, and that means that they are skillfully adept and well educated.”¹⁶ Work becomes the matter where students show their skills, knowledge, and it is in this *being capable of* that citizens are shaped.

In the saying, “Peasant, the landlord will no longer eat of your poverty!”¹⁷ we can find a policy of *being capable of*, where work is part of the vindication and humanization. The place occupied by work within this new education is not that of a mere technical nor formal skill, but rather seeks to face the student against something, a topic. The new education did not limit itself to students having a trade; it involved them feeling capable in relation to their community and context.

BEYOND SCHOOL: EMANCIPATING EDUCATION

Up until the Education Reform, education and school had been two concepts traditionally linked or, even, superimposed, as if by referring to the educational process one would inevitably be talking about school

education. Or, put differently, since the end of 19th century, school became the hegemonic form of education to which all society successes and failures were attributed.¹⁸ Salazar Bondy's education project involved separating education and school, in order to turn the latter into one of the interlocutors of the first.

The new education brought about by the Reform implied emancipating education from school. It could be said that it managed to get rid of the exclusivity and subordination of education to school and to bring it to the community, breaking the educational monopoly. By dissociating these concepts, we gained the possibility of thinking about other forms of education, beyond school, and putting it in dialogue with other voices that are not its own. Such dialogue aims at answering the question: what education does Peru need?

The critique of school, recurring in Salazar Bondy's work, suggests that it had been detached from society, shaping itself as an enclave, an enclosed subculture, turning itself into "a closed shop or, to employ a meaningful phrase, often used when referring to school buildings, a cloister, where kids and teenagers are locked up and secluded from reality."¹⁹ The use of the metaphor of the *enclave* to describe school is interesting, since it is a term usually employed to name the landlords' territories before the Land Reform, referring to private spaces with their own ends and interests, which had nothing to do with the community. This separation of school from the rest of the collective existence turns out to be a way to consolidate order, discipline, regularity, thus bypassing spaces of cooperation and spontaneity.²⁰

The Peruvian philosopher, Salazar Bondy, questions the presumed nature of the education-school relation. By replicating patterns, school, as an educational institution, becomes a cloister, turning its back to the needs of the country. The humanist perspective centered on work is not

school-like in its shape, because it does not depend on the institution to be able to be given; rather, precisely, its achievement lies in breaking down the school walls towards community.

One of the focus points of the Reform is the *de-schooling* of education, which involves breaking with the hegemony of school as the only form of education and enabling the creation of other spaces that can be connected to the community. However, the meaning of such de-schooling does not equal eradicating schools; far from it, it actually has to do with diversifying educational spaces in accordance to what happens in society and re-conceptualizing the community-school-State relation. De-schooling's main proposal is *Nuclearization*, which consists of creating Communal Education Nuclei, autonomous organisms which aim at promoting spaces of formation that integrate community with school. These Nuclei seek to reconfigure the community's position on the task of education, as well as to bring about policies, not only from the State towards the regions, but from the communities towards the State. This involves a territorial reordering of education which, at the same time, involves a re-signification.

The creation of these Nuclei moves "education's gravitational center from school territory to social life."²¹ By removing education from the only institution that was supposed to be able to exercise it, there is no longer a unity and, rather, an educational multiplicity becomes possible. It is an education assemblage, we could say, that allows for changes and new natures, in so far as it makes connections. This change of course for education, concerning school's goals, which involves Nuclearization, is a change in the conception of the State, of (self)reflection. Said displacement, where the communities' worries and needs have a space in the dialogue on education, constitutes, taking Deleuze and Guattari's concept, a process of *deterritorialization* of the machining which has traditionally

fallen on State officials.²² *Deterritorialization* is a process of change, in which the concepts “change in nature and connect with other multiplicities.”²³ What the Reform did, politically, by moving the gravitational center of what determines the goals of education to the community, was to ensure that the curriculum did not come from the central government without taking into consideration its destination, allowing, instead, changes, becoming multiplicity.

The emancipation of education from school does not cancel their relation. Nevertheless, what is particular to this process is that both the community and State can interchange student-teacher roles, “Each of these becoming brings about the deterritorialization of one term and the reterritorialization of the other; the two becoming interlink and form relays in a circulation of intensities pushing the deterritorialization ever further.”²⁴ Behind the Education Reform was the intention of, not only reconsidering the concept of education that Peru needed, but also rethinking school as a state institution.²⁵ It is undeniable that school as an institution would be too affected by the de-schooling proposal. It is important to highlight the reconfiguring of the community-school-State relation. The State, from its macro function, seeks homogenization, reproducing identity, and school has been the privileged means to achieve those goals. However, in said homogenization, it is paramount to give space to particularity, to the nuances that arise within each community. Following Deleuze and Guattari, the new relation set up after the suggestion of school as Nuclei implies that “the first [The State] operates as a transcendent model and tracing, even if it engenders its own escapes; the second [Nuclei] operates as an immanent process that overturns the model and outlines a map, even if it constitutes its own hierarchies.”²⁶ It is precisely this interaction between the national curriculum and locality what Salazar Bondy pretends to promote with Nuclearization, this construction, this mapping out (of Peru). Such a new consideration of

education, of the community-school-State relation, seeks “a horizontality that multiplies the relations and interchanges that arise from it.”²⁷ This is a relation that could be thought of as rhizomatic and is modeled by what comes from the State, which, in dialogue with particularity, can create multiplicity and new meanings.

THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS THE DEATH OF SCHOOL,
JUST ANOTHER WAY OF *DOING* SCHOOL

Traditional schools, instead of creating maps, acknowledging differences and particular needs, aim at maintaining the current situation, a tracing of what is believed the country needs, which does not take into consideration the territory reliefs, its multiplicity. While education was thought as a political, homogenous, flat map, Salazar Bondy thought about it as a geographical map, where every single relief could be seen and felt. An education that only passes on knowledge does not allow construction, nor multiplicity; rather, it fixates on permanency. As he mentions, “those who today judge school highlight various vices in the school system; it divides people into dozens, favors a few, it is expensive, it contributes to consolidating the structures of domination that prevail in society.”²⁸ Hence, school, perhaps more than any other institution, translates society’s organization and consolidates it and that is why Salazar Bondy sets forth de-schooling.²⁹

Nevertheless, we must highlight that, when talking about de-schooling, Salazar Bondy, unlike other reproductivism theorists of the time, does not argue for abolishing school. His proposal, as we have emphasized, aims at making up for its limitations by creating other spaces outside school. Nuclei seek to engage the community with the educational task. Opening up the curriculum and the school, to be discussed with the communities would mean that it could always be in a continuous becoming. It was an attempt to create, to leave the arboreal-hierarchical order

behind for the possibility of having many voices. Certainly, according to Salazar Bondy, Nuclearization did not involve the constitution of a school community outside of it, an imitation of the forms of school in the community, probably because of the reproductivist character that the Peruvian philosopher gave to it.

However, there are other ways to think and other senses of the school, which would scape the reproductivist model criticized by Salazar Bondy. In this regard, perhaps it is necessary to take into account that such criticism refers to school as something given, complete, to a school model historically set up, with predetermined features and functions. As such, any reflection about school presupposes its prior existence and all that remains is to criticize it or change it, but in no case is it questioned what it is. What is school? That could be a good starting point to think about, but in order to avoid encountering a mere description of the already existing school institution, we must go beyond and ask ourselves what school could be. Here we would like to think that school is not ontologically given, that we must analyze whether what we know as school is actually such, so that “it would give form to a school that has lost its form; it would re-form it in the sense of giving it a new form, of giving rise to a (new) school within school, thus reinventing it, recreating it.”³⁰ Such procedure of rethinking the new senses for school is of the order of creation, invention; hence, here onwards, we will talk about *making school*.

In *In defense of the School*, Masschelein and Simons advocate thinking about school from an educational point of view, although not as we know it, but rethinking its senses beyond the institutions identified with it. They differentiate between school as an institution and school as a form, suggesting that what makes school such is not necessarily found in the contemporary institution of school.³¹ In order to do so, the authors go back to the origins of school in Ancient Greece, and point out that

it emerged as a way of suspending inequalities and social privileges by giving and guaranteeing a time and space of leisure for everyone, beyond the background of inequalities.³² Therefore, *making school* means putting into parentheses a certain natural order of things to offer spare time equally, within a democratization operation.

The word “school” comes from the Greek *scholê*, which is translated to Latin as *otium*, and, to English as *leisure* or *free time*. It is a time liberated from the imperatives of productivity, usefulness and the demands external to school.³³ What Greek *scholê* achieves is distinguishing two uses of time, that of those whose work and production take away their time to do something else, and that of those who have time, since they are free from work demands and can destine their time to the pure pleasure of learning.³⁴ School gives time, a special kind of time that we could call school time. Thus, school time, as well as the learning that happens within it, cannot be an instrument for something else, it is not in function of something else, since it is defined by having its sense within itself. Said differently, the end of school is school itself. School is a pure means that, in order to create spare time, makes present (brings to the here and now) diverse operations, suspending (temporarily) the past and the future, to part with productive and economic time.

It is interesting to think about what makes possible such suspension in school time. Besides, it slows down time, allowing for things to get done slowly, with patience and paying attention, without hurry and with care.³⁵ Somehow, by getting rid of the weight of usefulness, a sort of profanation of the common uses of things and time occurs, which results in study, a relation with knowledge for knowledge in itself.³⁶ But this knowledge, in so far as school is the space of the common, must be collective, since, on one hand, everyone has equal access to it and everyone contributes to its construction, and, on the other hand, it allows people to

live in a society positioned as the common good.³⁷ Therefore, we could think about school as *ludus*, a space where our world is brought into play and is taken as a game.³⁸ Thus, school manages to present the world and create attention and interest. In this way, the new generation can appropriate it in order to commend themselves to the task of renewing it.³⁹

One could think that this conception of school as a space of suspension brings back the idea of *school-enclave*, isolated and blind to society, criticized by Salazar Bondy. One could also think that the fact that school does not answer to external interests takes from it the political character put forward by Salazar Bondy's perspective on education. Notwithstanding, school as *scholé*, although it lacks a determined ideological north, is in itself political, since, on one hand, starting from the equality, freedom and democratization that brings into frame, it allows the new generation to expose itself to the world to suspend it, study it and profane it, seeking to alter or distort the given state of things.⁴⁰ On the other hand, we are not talking about a school that turns its back to society, because "if we are to take the scholastic model seriously, we need not ask what the function or significance of the school is to the community, but, on the contrary, what significance the society can have for the school. And this comes down to asking ourselves what we find important in society and how to bring these things "*into play*" at school."⁴¹

Based on this way of *making* school, we would like to reflect on what could come out when thinking about Nuclearization and communal educational spaces from such suspension of time and its regular and productive uses. We aim at thinking about these spaces infused with *scholé*, a time of experience and encounter, which is also possible in the public space, in the streets.⁴² At the same time, we aim at pondering on what could the community infuse school with.

Finally, what would be the result if school constituted a rhizome

with the community? What assemblages and multiplicities would come out of deterritorializing school, understood as *scholé*, in community and community in school? And which would come out of reterritorializing school and community?

CONCLUSION

Perhaps we will never know how the Education Reform would have ended had the expected eight years of implementation been met or, if in practice, Salazar Bondy's proposal could have held up. However, we can point out several reflections which are still current and make us question how much we have progressed in these almost fifty years. Probably, including in the agenda the need of (re)thinking the relations between education, school and community, is one of the everlasting legacies and tasks left to us by Salazar Bondy's philosophy of education. Thus, in the current times of interruptions, disruptions, and uncertainties, "our education must be now, it cannot be but now, an education of crisis."⁴³

1 Translated by Vania Alarcón.

2 Carlos Skliar, *Pedagogía de Las Diferencias* (Buenos Aires: Noveduc, 2017), 29.

3 Augusto Salazar Bondy, *La Educación del Hombre Nuevo: La Reforma Educativa Peruana* (Buenos Aires: Paidós, 1975), 10.

4 Salazar Bondy, *La Educación del Hombre Nuevo*, 11.

5 Adriana Arpini, *Filosofía, Crítica y Compromiso en Augusto Salazar Bondy* (Lima: Fondo Editorial del Congreso del Perú, 2016), 151.

6 Jan Masschelein and Maarten Simons, "Europa 2006: Mensajes E-ducativos Desde Tierra de Nadie," in *Mensajes E-ducativos Desde Tierra de Nadie*, eds. Jan Masschelein and Maarten Simons (Barcelona: Laertes, 2006).

7 Arpini, *Filosofía, crítica y compromiso en Augusto Salazar Bondy*, 152.

8 Aldo Altamirano, "Visitar el pasado para pensar el presente: la Reforma

- Educativa Peruana a través del discurso pedagógico de Augusto Salazar Bondy,” *Saberes y Prácticas* 5, no. 2 (2020): 1-16.
- 9 Arpini, *Filosofía, crítica y compromiso en Augusto Salazar Bondy*, 149.
- 10 Augusto Salazar Bondy, *Entre Escila y Caribdis: reflexiones sobre la vida peruana* (Lima: Casa de la Cultura del Perú, 1969), 69.
- 11 Augusto Salazar Bondy, *Dominación y liberación* (Lima: Fondo editorial de la Facultad de Letras UNMSM, 1995), 280
- 12 Salazar Bondy, *Dominación y liberación*, 271.
- 13 Salazar Bondy, *La educación del hombre nuevo*, 36.
- 14 Jan Masschelein and Maarten Simons, *In defense of the school: a public issue* (Leuven: Education, Culture & Society Publishers, 2013), 77.
- 15 Walter Kohan, *The Inventive Schoolmaster* (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2015), 38.
- 16 Masschelein and Simons, *In defense of the school*, 77.
- 17 Frase de Velasco, presidente del Perú durante el Gobierno Revolucionario de las Fuerzas Armadas, con el que termina su discurso anunciando la Reforma Agraria.
- 18 Pablo Pineau, ”¿POR QUÉ TRIUNFÓ LA ESCUELA? o la modernidad dijo: ‘Esto es educación’, y la escuela respondió: ‘Yo me ocupo’,” in *La escuela como máquina de educar: Tres escritos sobre un proyecto de la modernidad*, eds. Pablo Pineau, Inés Dussel, and Marcelo Caruso (Buenos Aires: Paidós, 2001), 27-28.
- 19 Salazar Bondy, *La educación del hombre nuevo*, 68.
- 20 Salazar Bondy, *La educación del hombre nuevo*, 65.
- 21 Salazar Bondy, *La educación del hombre nuevo*, 92.
- 22 Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: capitalism and schizophrenia*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 9.
- 23 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: capitalism and schizophrenia*, 9.
- 24 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: capitalism and schizophrenia*, 10.
- 25 Laura Galazzi. *Del encierro al control. Enclaves (re)productivos de la escuela contemporánea*.

- (Buenos Aires: TesseoPress, 2017), 195.
- 26 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: capitalism and schizophrenia*, 20.
- 27 Daniel Lins, “Manguê’s school ou por uma pedagogia rizomática,” *Educ. Soc.*, Campinas, vol. 26, n. 93, (2005): 1229-1256.
- 28 Salazar Bondy, *La educación del hombre nuevo*, 68.
- 29 Salazar Bondy, *Dominación y liberación*, 276-277.
- 30 Walter Kohan, *The Inventive Schoolmaster*, 80.
- 31 Masschelein and Simons, *In defense of the school*, 29.
- 32 Masschelein and Simons, *In defense of the school*, 29-30.
- 33 Masschelein and Simons, *In defense of the school*, 29.
- 34 Jacques Rancière, “École, production, égalité,” in *L’ école de la démocratie*, ed. Xavier Renou (Paris: Edilig Fondation Diderot, 1988).
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- 37 Maximiliano Durán and Walter Kohan, *Manifiesto por una escola filosófica popular* (Rio de Janeiro: Nefi Edições, 2018), 130-131.
- 38 Jan Masschelein and Maarten Simons, “El odio a la educación pública. La escuela como marca de la democracia,” in Jacques Rancière. *La educación pública y la domesticación de la democracia*, eds. Maarten Simons, Jan Masschelein, and Jorge Larrosa (Buenos Aires: Miño y Dávila, 2017), 326.
- 39 Masschelein and Simons, *In defense of the school*, 44-45.
- 40 Jan Masschelein and Maarten Simons, “Sobre la escuela que defendemos: Preguntas en relación a la escuela,” in *Elogio de la escuela*, ed. Jorge Larrosa (Buenos Aires: Miño y Dávila, 2018).
- 41 Masschelein and Simons, *In defense of the school*, 77.
- 42 Sarah Nery, *#Ocupa: uma experiência educativa* (Rio de Janeiro: NEFI Edições, 2018),

229-230.

43 Salazar Bondy, *Entre escila y caribdis*, 71.