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### Unplugging the Affective Domain: Can "Slow Spaces" Really Improve the Value of Cultural Literacy?

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### Introduction

Images of the young lurk at the heart of the popular representation of the unplugging trend, a loose movement that aims to reinstate offline experience as a core part of learning and social development, and to establish a space for the "slow" in the always-on world of modern online communication, networking, noise and "digital maximalism" (Powers, *PBS*). The prospect is understandably of interest to many educators, not least of all in the Humanities where the culture of on-screen reading may seem to be gradually, or not so gradually, eroding the time spent alone with the printed page.

Such a conceptualisation ties the diminishment of literacy – as a broad set of cultural values placing worth on traditional literary culture, knowledge, engagement and retention rather than the mere fact of being literate (Bauerlein, *Dumbest Generation* 9) – to upcoming generations of students and the corresponding prevalence of "fast" online and social networking technology. But the apparent connections between the devaluation of cultural literacy and the use of technology among younger generations are not without their problematic elements.

By examining two unplugging narrative constructs by Mark Bauerlein and William Powers in relation to Žižek's conception of the role of ideology in narratives of representation, we can begin to compare the notion of a displaced "literariness" with modernist fantasies of a return to a pre-modern world of completeness and cohesiveness. To Žižek, such narratives of technological disruption allow for ideological positions to be delivered as part of a pursuit of some displaced realm that will restore a lost state of cohesive unity, a modernist construction that fails to address "disruption" as an inherent and constitutive element of community, communication and subjectivity, regardless of technological presence and progress. This suggests not only a structural insufficiency in these popular narrative foundations, but also a potential diversion from a more potent source of the debasement of cultural literary values that has little to do with technological and generational progression.

From this, we can suggest that the formation of "slow spaces," in which literary values of the past can be freely revisited, acts primarily as a Carnivalesque eruption, re-enforcing rather than disrupting a dominant "un-literary" hegemony and enabling its steady continuation rather than promoting actual change in cultural values.

Following this, we can suggest that integral to the problem of establishing (or re-establishing) a value for literacy in a discussion of technologised and de-technologised spaces cannot be pursued

without considering the Affective Domain, a difficult-to-define and potentially under-explored element of teaching and learning relating to how values, ideals and worldviews are developed and maintained as part of a student's self-identity, rather than merely demonstrated cognitively in a learning environment.

Attempts to directly address the Affective Domain followed from an earlier study into the Cognitive Domain; Krathwohl, Bloom, and Masia sought to determine how "thoughts, feelings, attitudes, knowledges" could be "classified in the context of an educational outcome" (Krathwohl et. al. 3-4). A seminal work in affective study, although its results may be considered highly problematic due to ideological assumptions about evaluating desired internal states, the Affective Domain was considered to involve objectives relating to "interests, attitudes, appreciations, values, and emotional sets of biases" (7). In short, it examined how ideas and values were internalised as a personal understanding integrated into a broader world-view and sense of identity beyond mere cognitive understanding and replication of tasks.

Typical teaching spaces may insist on certain cognitive and comprehension tasks being demonstrated, but consideration of the Affective Domain requires us to ask if and how these are naturalised into students' perspectives of the world and their own sense of self and self-worth. In fact, if we consider the existing, ongoing and dominant social values of cultural literacy in relation to the Affective Domain, the presence (or absence) of the internet and online technology in the classroom may be rendered far less relevant than it initially appears.

If such an affective element is vital for the "completion" of value internalisation, rather than mere niche-space replication, then it is vital to consider precisely whose Affect is being transmitted and internalised. Though university institutions may promote broader notions of literacy as part of their core values (to varying degrees), such values for non-functional literacy may already be seen to be diminished within the university realm. As such, presenting students with a "slow" space may have little to do with the broader functioning of their environment, promoting a primarily cognitive rather than affective engagement with literacy. Further, staff pursuing such an affective nurturing of literary values in "slow" spaces may find their actions used to re-enforce institutionalised rhetoric, while finding their actual process unsupported and unintegrated into the dominant university structure.

From this point, we can return to Žižek's conceptualisation of the common notion of the "return of the repressed" to suggest that the apparent dissolution of cultural literacy can be understood not as a sudden break with traditional literary values, but rather as a "returned" restatement of well-established social and institutional values.

From our affective standpoint, we can see this form of the return of the repressed as a fundamentally affective engagement: the worldview has been established, but it has been established as a replication of values that are simultaneously disavowed and demonstrated. Combined with examples of teaching experiences and affective engagements in an increasingly corporatised university realm, we can reaffirm that it may be difficult to suggest that the increased drive towards corporatised learning environments is driven by the very students who are only just entering the institution.

Such an understanding of the way unplugging narratives are constructed should assist in altering popular representation of cultural literary devaluation and the role of youth and technology in order to allow the move towards "slowness" to address broader cultural values rather than relegating itself, perhaps impotently, to niche spaces of social withdrawal and hegemonic reaffirmation.

**The Unplugging Movement Plugs-In: Aiming at The Kids**

Despite the wide "alliance to slow the headlong rush" (Bauerlein, *Dumbest Generation* viii) into technology, it is particularly interesting to consider the unplugging movement not in how it represents itself in the traditional forms it aims to promote (i.e. books and traditional slow media), but in the realm of popular "fast" media discussion: that very realm that the movement, one way or another, sees as a disruptive and degrading cultural force.

While this approach may risk validating claims that online "skimming" or "scanning" of text has replaced "slow" reading (Bauerlein, "Online Literacy"; Bauerlein, *Dumbest Generation* 143-147; Powers, "Hamlet's Blackberry" 48), we can nevertheless gain a certain insight into the propagation of "slowing down" by examining how these authors represent their offline push from within the online environment. In this realm of "fast" skimming, rapid information sharing and "crowdedness … never having a break from stimulation, from information, from distraction" (Powers, *PBS*), both authors present a highly compressed and communicable set of images, designed to circulate in the very space that they target as being problematic for both general social well-being and the fate of literacy itself. [1] In examining these two authors' use of this "fast" space, we can consider how parts of this movement portray the unplugging ideology within the confines of the very plugged-in world that it seeks, in varying degrees, to disrupt and invalidate.

Both Bauerlein and Powers use "younger" people when presenting a compressed version of their unplugging outlooks. Bauerlein does so in "Online Literacy *Is* a Lesser Kind" [2] , presenting a summary of the ideas from his book *The Dumbest Generation: Never Trust Anyone under 30*, while Powers does so while speaking briefly of his book, *Hamlet's Blackberry: A Practical Philosophy for Building a Good Life in the Digital Age*, in an interview with Jeffrey Brown of the *PBS Newshour*. While they share the same adherence to the importance of establishing an offline and unplugged personal and social space, their images of the young offer tonal variations.

Powers presents unplugging as a gentle call to "quiet time," and concludes his interview by describing the experience of giving an early talk on the topic:

> After the speech, the people who came up to me and really buttonholed me most urgently were – tended to be younger people. And a few of them really had tears in their eyes and said, you know, I have never – I didn't even know this was an option. (Powers, *PBS*)

Where Brown offers a kind of revelation, Bauerlein's compression of his own approach places a different emphasis on the role of the "younger" person:

> In an "Introduction to Poetry" class a while back, when I asked students to memorize 20 lines of verse and recite them to the others at the next meeting, a voice blurted, "Why?" The student wasn't being impudent or sullen. She just didn't see any purpose or value in the task. Canny and quick, she judged the plodding process of recording others' words a primitive exercise. (Bauerlein, "Online Literacy")

In the "fast" space of summaries for media distribution, Powers summarises his approach as "selective disconnecting," creating opportunities to find a balance between the "wonder" and the "burden" of digital technology (Powers, *PBS*), while Bauerlein's stance is more active, calling for the creation of "slow-reading" and "slow-writing" inside the classroom and defining himself directly as an "antagonist" towards technology's presence ("Online Literacy"). Despite their differences in approach, both thrive on the underlying narrative of a more authentic (and, by extension, more culturally worthwhile) realm outside the parameters of the workings of everyday modern society (whether that existence be located in the past, future, or in a marginalised culture): a dichotomy of off- and on-line spaces, the natural world having been displaced by the technological, and traditional cultural literacy values displaced by the encroachment of the

young.

**Slow Spaces and Pre-modern Fantasy**

Such a narrative construction of a somehow authentic external existence freed from the constraints of the constructed and fabricated modern world is, of course, hardly new or limited to the current plugged-in world: the narrative fits neatly into a fantasy of removal from a compromised social sphere of human (in-)activity. Žižek charts a similar dichotomy of the external-natural and the constructed-fabricated in science-fiction films like *Zardoz* (1974) and *Logan's Run* (1976) through to variations such as the *The Matrix* (1999) and beyond. In these narrative constructions, the enclosed and controlled realms of modern society are presented only so that they may be escaped from, making way for a protagonist's flight into the "smell and decay of the raw reality" (Žižek, *Enjoy* 228). In modernist fashion, a natural balance is seen as lost but, nevertheless, still "out there."

The dichotomy is of course not merely confined to a modern context, but the contrast between the modern-constructed and the displaced-authentic, the communal and the personal, provides a narrative foundation for all kinds of ideological positions and philosophical viewpoints, drawing on the notion of a realm external to contemporary human functionality that offers a more complete and unified form of existence.

While this may be technological in form (Powers draws on Henry David Thoreau's notion of the "modern" disease of too-frequent trips to the post office), the technology is, in fact, secondary to this narrative foundation itself. Diogenes of Sinope rolled his empty barrel to and fro in an ironic statement on the bustling activity of the town around him, equating the action of the citizens with a kind of foolish *inaction* and "denouncing through his actions the mindless bustle that characterizes much of human existence" (Navia 23). Soren Kierkegaard in "The Present Age" approached meaningless (in)activity as a constitutive element of social being, rather than part of some external imposition upon society. "Reflection" itself – the mere engagement in the network of cultural communication and everyday "bustle" – is the ceaseless and stultifying activity of the "present age" that inhibits the emergence of an authentic reality or existence: society's activity, which always seems to be on the verge of something but never quite delivers it, is part of the ordinary social network of human and community structures, regardless of "speed" or technological form. Here, the deadlock is constitutive of the human condition and hegemonic functionality rather than caused by any external imposition upon a natural order. Similarly, Heidegger posits an inherent disconnection of the human condition from itself when enmeshed in the surrounding activity of the mass of the "They":

> When Dasein, tranquilized, and "understanding" everything, thus compares itself with everything, it drifts along towards an alienation [*Entfremdung*] in which its ownmost potentiality-for-Being is hidden from it. Falling Being-in-the-world is not only tempting and tranquilizing; it is at the same time *alienating.* (Heidegger 222)

The constructed narratives of unplugging equate an online realm of "speed" with this notion of ceaseless "activity" [3] , but they see this as a disruptive incursion rather than an inherent state, offering the "slow" or "unplugged" realm as an authentic existence that seems to lurk beyond the boundaries of dominant mainstream social activity. We are left with the modernist fantasy of the pre-modern world, where reality could be *experienced* as an actual event and not as a conglomerated mass of compromised, predefined and inauthentic responses.

Just as Kierkegaard and Diogenes seem to suggest so much activity without any real *action*, we might similarly summarise Bauerlein's and Powers's positions in relation to online reading as: so much reading (text messages, notes, emails, skimming), but so little *reading* (literature, art,

substantial texts, slow-reading, etc.). But for Bauerlein and Powers, these narratives present the incursion of technology as a disruptive element rather than a technological reaffirmation of a natural state of personal and social disruption.

The result is a narrative that relies on a certain call to withdraw to garner its authenticity. From the perspective of Žižek's Lacanian psychoanalytic theory, the pursuit of the external realm freed from the compromised nature of daily human existence is fundamentally modernist in its outlook, positing a certain authentic "completeness" at the heart of the narrative/discussion: a kind of pursuit of a return to order rather than the postmodern state in which "lack" or the displacement from this suggested realm is itself constitutive of the human experience. As Žižek asks: "What if ideology resides in the very belief that, outside the closure of the finite universe, there is some "true reality" to be entered?" (Žižek "Matrix").

### Carnivalesque Re-affirmation

By relying on a dichotomy of on- and off-line spaces, the constitutive space (the "modern" or, in this case, "online" world) is countered only by the promise of an alternate space, rather than having this promised space directly encounter the online or hegemonic world. In essence, the solution remains "out there," the escape to another realm, rather than an inherent possibility within the modern world. At the same time, the disruption is presented as coming from *without* – the emergence of technology and the encroachment of the young – rather than from within the hegemonic realm itself.

The innate conservatism of the approach is relatively clear in Powers's compressed narrative: though the online world might be questioned, it is nevertheless ultimately re-enforced. Powers does not offer a new perspective towards dominant hegemony, but rather allows the online world to continue unchallenged with occasional breaks for offline time. In essence, Powers is reclaiming the weekend as offline space, but this does not fundamentally alter the foundation that already allows for a "weekend" space.

In fact, the hegemony that devalues the free or slow space is likely strengthened by the promise of these non-disruptive spaces rather then weakened by them. As with notions of the Carnivalesque, the purely temporary nature of the deviation from the dominant hegemony merely reaffirms its power: the removal from that realm only exists insofar as one ultimately returns without any major disruption of social functionality. As Žižek puts it, this Carnivalesque state is that of an "explosion," but one that is "destined to be followed by a sobering morning after" (Žižek, *Organs* 213).

Similarly, as Žižek notes in relation to resistance to emerging hegemony (here in relation to protests against the war in Iraq), the creation of isolated pockets of resistance may ultimately result in hegemonic re-enforcement:

> Their paradoxical outcome was that both sides were satisfied. The protesters saved their beautiful souls: they made it clear that they don't agree with the government's policy on Iraq. Those in power calmly accepted it, even profited from it: not only did the protests in no way prevent the already-made decision to attack Iraq; they also served to legitimise it. (Žižek, "Resistance")

Similarly, this Carnivalesque re-enforcement remains true of Bauerlein's approach, although it claims to engage with online space as a more adversarial force. In essence, Bauerlein's suggestion that online "reading" fails to meet the standards of humanities-style literacy that we should be demanding from students may seem reasonable enough, as with the idea that our educational standards shouldn't be stooping to give students something they immediately recognise the moment they enter the institution. And yet, the understanding of a broader "real world" value for

cultural literacy value itself remains unquestioned through Bauerlein's presentation of isolated "niche" spaces for "slow" literacy. As such, suggesting that new patterns and habits of online reading are themselves the main cause of a new cultural illiteracy is problematic, even if they do seem to suggest the presence of a new, even inferior, cultural literacy. Technology itself and the image of the emerging "under-30s" may act a smokescreen for already-established long-term priorities in relation to the value of cultural literacy.

Though scanning a screen may not be the same as reading, as Bauerlein argues, the problem may not simply be that online reading relies on skimming, scanning, and selecting information that the reader has already decided they're looking for; an alternate problem may be that the benefits and uses of a purely functional literacy are so readily apparent and reinforced in broader capitalist and consumerist society. Meanwhile, a more nuanced cultural literacy may struggle to find any day-to-day validation in terms of functionality, social progression, financial stability, and other cultural and ideological mandates of success, stability and engagement within the modern world. At this point, the role of the Affective Domain becomes of particular interest.

### The Affective Element: When Students Ask "Why?"

Bauerlein posits the necessity of claiming the classroom as a "slow" space freed from the outside world, but this may prove, at the very least, inefficient if we consider suggestions that 70-90% of learning is informal (outside of the classroom context) compared to up to 30% that takes place within educational institutions (Kahnwald 1). While the online space may be a key part of the "informal" space, it nevertheless cannot be said to represent the totality of the hegemonic space itself, and the full extent of "outside learning" cannot be appropriately assessed if limited to the effects of technology alone.

Bauerlein's presentation of the question "why?" from a young student who could not see the value in a traditional literary task (memorising poetry) is more complicated than its presentation suggests; there is little reason to believe that the question will disappear simply by reverting to old styles of literacy in the classroom. The question is entirely related to *affective* concerns: we can insist upon certain kinds of literacy in a given environment, but how do we naturalise them and create a sense of personal worth and value ingrained into students' social understanding and awareness?

What is problematic about presenting the "why?" question as a disruption rather than an inherent part of the literacy process is that it assumes a natural level of pre-existing affective understanding that has been displaced, rather than as a core problem of understanding the values of cultural literacy in any context. The difficulty of establishing affective engagement with cultural literacy, though it may cross over into online spaces, cannot be limited to the electronic realm alone.

As such, when a student asks *why* they should be interested in developing their cultural literacy, we cannot simply assume that the question implies a social or cultural misunderstanding, or that this question is limited to what Bauerlein refers to as the "dumbest generation" and new associated reading habits. If we consider that students' environmental exposure may involve more than technologically-related ideas, it is necessary to consider what ongoing hegemonic values have been placed on a nuanced cultural literacy (by, to extend Bauerlein's own provocative idea, the over-30s) and how these may be repeated *in their original form* in the new technological environment (see Boyd, "White Flight" 34; Boyd, "Class Online"; Žižek "One Measure"; Žižek *Reality* for how online networks reassert and redeliver the hegemonic foundations of the offline world). To ask this "why?" question of affective understanding more broadly: why does (or would) the individual reach for that which seemingly offers "neither profit nor social advantage" (Brecht)?

This question is simultaneously one of endorsement (the fact that such a thing happens) and direct interrogation (the fact that it offers little demonstrable value). In other words, in what way will students benefit from a personal engagement with cultural literacy? And, in an affective sense, how can the answer, or the inkling of one, be ingrained into a naturalised world-view? As such, the lack of value for literacy cannot be necessarily regarded as an entirely new development; in fact, it can be charted in the very values being espoused by university and other mainstream cultures.

In this light we can consider Kathleen Lynch's suggestion that the overt legitimacy of institutional commercialisation in the university system, which we can see as a kind of espoused, but repressed, truth inherent in the desire for institutional cultural legitimacy: "What is new about the commercialization of university education in the 21st century is its moral legitimacy. Commercialization is normalized" (Lynch 54).

Far from approaching unannounced from the "young," Lynch points out that:

> A study of student values in higher education in the US found that students now prioritized making money as a major goal of education in a way they did not 30 years ago; the commercialization of education has led to a commercialization of interests and values among students. (Lynch 63)

Importantly in relation to establishing "niche" spaces within such an environment, the adaptability of students' understanding of the preferred outcomes in the environment around them is also noted in a basic educational context by Marton and Saljo, who suggest that students may ignore "deep" learning (though they are capable of it) in order to present a more readily acceptable or accessible "surface" learning. This can work both ways: without addressing real-world concerns, students may engage with "deep" learning (which, here, we can associate with proposed spaces of "slow" learning) only insofar as it is expected of them in a certain "unplugged" environment, while reverting to the "surface" learning (here aligned the online "fast" environment) in other real-world contexts. The fact that students are capable of slowing down, does not, in fact, indicate that it delivers any preferred outcome for them. The mere presence of "deeper" learning in "slow" environments does not necessarily mean that the process has been integrated into a personal world-view as would be expected by a traditional understanding of positive engagement with the Affective Domain.

### Slow Spaces, "Unencumbered by Caring"?

From an educator's perspective, the potential freedom in a "slowed-down" niche space may be more problematic than it seems, with institutions benefiting from affective, personal and "slow" engagement provided by staff, while delivering little actual support (whether financial or emotional/affective) for the "slow" process itself. Though "slow" literacy may remain part of the institutional rhetoric, it may nevertheless be merely annexed to the actual focus of the institution.

Deborah Churchmana and Sharron King consider the changing environment in tertiary institutions and how academics respond to the increased move towards "a more corporate managerialistic mode of operating" (Churchmana & King 507), contrasting academics' accounts of their own experiences with official institutional public accounts. They concluding "by addressing some of the concerns inherent in the loss of plurality that occurs when tertiary institutions move towards an homogenised environment" (Churchmana & King 507). As a result, learning takes place within the context of a corporate narrative, and workplace identity may be called into question not merely by changes in student values, but by changes in university context, management and goals of education. The affective engagement, seen in Churchmana and King as "values" (508), is forced to remain secondary to functional outcomes in a changing

environment, suggesting that further strategies are required to engage with affective issues, both individually and institutionally.

Similarly, Panikkos Constanti and Paul Gibbs focus on "emotional labour" (Constanti & Gibbs 243) as a necessary element of understanding academic work, especially "in an age of managerialism and to the notion of the student as customer" (Constanti & Gibbs 248). This suggests that academics may need to conceal feelings and personal priorities in order to deliver a service as expected, for both the management and the customer/student, and that this "emotional labour" is required both for delivery of "services" and "coping with the need to conceal real feelings" (Constanti & Gibbs 243).

As such, it is problematic to suggest that an increased drive towards corporatised values in the university system is driven by the very students who are only just entering the institution. Rather than students acting as an imposition on existing cultural values, such values may be returned by the students as directly-stated but culturally-repressed content. The basic corporate hegemony of the university structure may be as disruptive to affective engagement with cultural literary values as any individual technological element.

In fact, Lynch's summary of the corporate university culture almost mirrors Kierkegaard's notion of the constant motion of details and diversions without ever homing in on the authentic core of experience:

> Everything one does must be counted, and only the measurable matters. Trust in professional integrity and peer regulation has been replaced with bibliometric indicators ... When externally controlled performance indicators are the constant point of reference for one's work, regardless of how meaningless they might be, this leads to feelings of personal inauthenticity. (Lynch 55)

Lynch also notes "little incentive to innovate or to challenge prevailing orthodoxies, necessary though it may be" (Lynch 55) and also suggests that personal and educational values are compromised by institutional requirements: "Those committed to independent scholarship and education are asked to live a lie, to sign up to values and practices which they believe are morally abhorrent and scholastically futile" (Lynch 55).

Karl Jaspers points out that the term "institution" itself "necessarily implies compromises" and that "a permanent state of tension exists at the university between the idea and the short-comings of the institutional and corporate reality" (Jaspers 70); however, Lynch notes an escalation of institutional disconnection, focusing on "the intensification of carelessness at the heart of management" (Lynch 57), and the expectation of workers who are always available and never not "at work." Lynch also notes a "declining sense of responsibility for others, particularly for students" (Lynch 57) and pointedly concludes that "to be a successful academic is to be unencumbered by caring" (Lynch 63).

The result is that affective engagement with cultural literacy values may need to emerge as a kind of covert "caring," a fostering of personal values and an extended engagement with the Affective Domain of learning that is done primarily as a personal and unseen pursuit: an affective engagement with students that only arises due to the educator's own individual conception of cultural literacy necessities within the university, not one that is supported by the institution itself. This is particularly disruptive when key to affective engagement is the "importance of getting support for or being able to form, articulate and negotiate one's values within a community" (Voigt & MacFarlane). Joanna Crossman notes the importance of empathy and emotional sharing (Crossman 313) in the learning process, and Leigh O'Brien argues that "teacher educators who deliberately create and nurture caring teacher-student relationships, despite the many challenges, benefit both themselves and their students" (O'Brien 109), but the obligation

nevertheless remains on the teacher to communicate this to the student. Managerial constraints upon the teacher may render this creation of a worldview through affective engagement a difficult or impossible task if it is not integrated into broader institutional values. [4]

### The Return of the Repressed – Whose Affect is it, Anyway?

By pursuing broader notions of affective engagement not limited to technology, we can consider that question "why?" from the "under-30s" when faced with a traditional literacy task as something of a return of repressed content. As Žižek formulates the popular notion, the repressed returns not as some kind of unknown extra element beyond the parameters of ideology, but in the very superficial truth of that ideology's rhetoric, *taken at face value*. In other words, a capitalist hegemony receives its returned "statement" – its world-view taken at face value – in the "young" who respond to it at face value, rather than to its avowed rhetoric of broader cultural values. It is not the *implied* values that are "returned" (what was "really meant"), but rather those values that are, in fact, expressed directly and demonstrably: the return is not a hidden meaning, but rather the shock of meaning being returned in its actual, expressed, literal form.

Žižek demonstrates this notion with reference to Alfred Hitchcock's *Rope* (1948), in which a philosophy teacher despairs that his students have misunderstood his message of Nietzchean superiority and murdered another student when, in fact, they have understood his teachings perfectly and acted upon them in good faith: "following the Lacanian definition of communication, he gets back from the other his own message in its inverted, true form – he is shaken and shrinks back from the consequences of his own words, i.e., he is not prepared to recognize in them his own truth" (Žižek, *Enjoy* 37). Pursuing Žižek's conceptualisation of the return of the repressed, we can instead locate the diminishment of the value of cultural literacy not in a new and emerging place, but from within the very values that are already, in fact, being enunciated by an existing culture. The lack of value for literacy is not a new development, but rather lies in the very values espoused by university and other mainstream cultures.

Considering changing literary values in the young as a return of the superficial truth may suggest emerging students acting as a reconfirmation of this "moral legitimacy" (Lynch 54) of commercialisation rather than being a disruption of a traditional literacy in themselves: "New liberal thinking in education has succeeded in doing what classical liberalism did not do: it subordinates and trivializes education that has no market value" (Lynch 62). As Robert Jensen notes of the corporate values applied to the university sector, there are apparently "two alternatives in college classrooms: purely practical or interesting irrelevance" (Jensen). [5]

Common humanities rhetoric about producing well-rounded graduates with a broad skill base that makes them more employable validates the superficial process of humanities education, but not necessarily the core of the humanities, in-depth knowledge or nuanced cultural literacy. As with the Carnivalesque approach of creating offline space, having "done it" may be ultimately seen as more important than being able to "do it": the rhetoric confirms the lack of real-world relevance in tying the extended cultural literacy values to later employment prospects that will no longer require them to any real extent (see Bauerlein's "The Underestimation of Cultural Literacy" for an "informal" professional application of cultural literacy). By directing the problem towards the "young" rather then addressing the institutionalised circumstances they may find themselves reacting to, Bauerlein ends up echoing Blanche DuBois's old despair over attempting "to instil a bunch of bobby-soxers and drug-store Romeos with a reverence for Hawthorne and Whitman and Poe!" (Williams 151). Bauerlein denies accusations of simply repeating generational despair (*Dumbest Generation*, viii-xi), but ultimately does so by restricting the frame of reference for literacy relevance-creation to technological and generational encroachment.

If we cannot rely on literary affective outlooks being established in students, then we must

consider what affective concerns have already been established. Rather than a blank slate waiting for affective fulfilment, engagement with the affective domain emerges as a conflict of perspectives; there is no ideological neutral state, only a spectrum of ideological outlooks that must be wrestled with. Žižek's notion of the return of the repressed is particularly interesting, suggesting the traits being exhibited may represent not simply a devaluation of one set of values, but, in fact, the "returned" assertion of actual expressed social and cultural values. The creation of a narrative of external disruption upon a neutral state of "literacy," without particular attention to the Affective Domain and its role in relation to hegemony, the functioning of educational institutions, and the formation of identity and values, is a popular manifestation of the unplugging movement that targets the young with a modernist construction of a lost cultural authenticity, but fails to address the true affective value of cultural literacy in broader society. This applies to those both over and under thirty. As such, it may see its "victory" relegate "slowness" merely to spaces of Carnivalesque eruption, emerging briefly but, ultimately, returning to a state of impotence in a "fast" hegemony.

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### Endnotes

1. The two authors do not, of course, represent the entirety of the unplugging movement. Rather they are being analysed due to their use of two tonally different but functionally similar representations of a "slow" unplugging narrative in the "fast" online realm.

2. Bauerlein does not consider the *PBS Newshour* to be part of this realm (*Dumbest Generation* 13) and it is highly unlikely that *The Chronicle of Higher Education* would be considered a part of it, either. However, while these may be initially located outside of the common set of online problem spaces – "of browsing, blogging, IMing, Twittering, and Facebooking" (Bauerlein, "Online Literacy") – both examples selected provide compressed information presented for easy distribution both online and by offline "fast" media; their official sources may not be seen as problematic in themselves, but, regardless of their perceived stature, they nevertheless remain connected directly to the "switched-on" environment and circulation of information in a way that the "slow" cores (the books themselves) do not.

3. Dee Brown constructs a similar sense of a historical conflict between the civilised and the natural – the modern and the lost – in describing the reactions of Red Cloud and a delegation of Sioux during a trip to Washington in 1870: "The white men were as thick and numerous and aimless as grasshoppers, moving always in a hurry but never seeming to get to whatever place it was they were going to" (Brown 147).

4. Recent pilot interview results (gathered through a phenomenographic interview process) from "Comprehensive Learning Ecologies", an ongoing study into University of South Australia teachers' conceptions of the Affective Domain, suggested a considerable level of mental negotiation with managerial requirements, with targeted engagement with the Affective Domain rarely being served by the institutional approaches. While classes and

technological teaching requirements were determined by university policy and accepted as such, the burdens of creating an appropriate teaching environment, one that met the requirements of both teacher and student affective needs, was left primarily up to the teaching staff with little strategy in place for this. This lack of institutional strategy may be important when considering an example like that of Csikszentmihalyi, who questions the notion of developing thought-based personal improvement; rather, positive "flow" experiences are created by practical application instead of establishing individual mental states. This perspective may be especially confronting for the humanities if we follow the line of reasoning that puts it in opposition with practical and demonstrable outcomes, both in relation to managerial concerns and in general society.

5. Positing "slow" alternatives that can be held in direct alignment with demonstrable or cognitive outcomes may also be problematic in that David Dewhurst questions letting the Affective Domain be tied to the Cognitive Domain in a way that simply sees emotion regulated by reason, suggesting, rather, that the nuances of subtle interplay cannot always be seen as a straightforward interaction and that emotional reality cannot always be linked simply to a defined notion of reason. From this perspective, engagement with the Affective Domain requires its own established context rather than being left as an independently pursued subsidiary of outcome-based learning.

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Texting, which ori- ginated around the turn of the century, is the exchange of brief text messages between mobile phones. IM became popular in the beginning of the twenty-first century. It is the online exchange of text messages between two or more individuals (i) using a mobile phone application or an Internet application, (ii) through a social networking site or (iii) within an online game. Both are forms of computer-mediated communi- cation (CMC), the difference being that IMing is real-time, that is synchronous CMC, whereas texting is asynchronous CMC. The Slow Movement aims to address the issue of 'time poverty' through making connections. If we think about the following trends. Buddhism is the fastest growing religion in the world today. People are turning to organic food in droves. Schools are in turmoil. Â This website supports a growing cultural shift towards slowing down. On this site we discuss how we have lost connection to most aspects of our life and to the natural world and rhythms around us, and how we can reconnect â€" how we can live a connected life. The Slow Movement is a worldwide movement to recapture Meaningful Connection this state of connectedness. The movement is gaining momentum, as more and more people recognise their discomfort at the fast pace and disconnected nature of their lives. MacFarlane, K. (2011), 'Unplugging the Affective Domain: Can "Slow Spaces" Really Improve the Value of Cultural Literacy?'. Transformations, Issue No. 20, 2011 - Slow Media issue. Petrescu, I.; MacFarlane, K. (2011), 'Poetry and Cultural Bridges: Beyond Politics and Economics' (pdf). Paper presented as part of "International Symposium on the Potential for Artistic Expression to Cross Cultural Barriers and the Relationship Between Art, Culture, and International Relations", Berlin 17-20 February 2011. MacFarlane, K. (2011), 'Wrestling with Their Ghos Poetry being slow to resolve dependencies seems to be a reoccuring issue: #476 - Poetry resolving dependencies is amazingly slow. #819 - Resolving dependencies are slow. #832 - Poetry update never finishes resolve and Poetry show --outdated hangs. #1047 - Poetry doesn't resolve on MacOs Mojave. Â Ultimately, the issue lies with PyPi having no flag to distinguish properly-specified (ie wheel) vs improperly. Poetry accepts this, instead of attempting to work around it. Copy link. The article explores Ukrainian scientistsâ€™ public engagement through popular science media, which they launch themselves, and which have become a component of the countryâ€™s media environment. Today, unlike the long-standing tradition of avoiding contact with public, Ukrainian scientists especially of the younger generation have understood the importance of public engagement. Popular science media produced by scientists play a role of a communication platform that aims to unite science with a general audience. According to the study results, there is no doubt about social significance of scient