

## **Americans Minds are Artificially Intelligent**

**By John Stanton**

*“I advocate the thesis which holds that the tendency towards totalitarianism is part of the essence of the machine, and originally proceeded from the realm of technology; that the tendency, inherent to every machine as such, to subjugate the world, to parasitically seize upon the fragments that have not yet been subjugated, to merge with other machines and to operate with them as pieces of a single, total machine: I maintain that this tendency represents the fundamental fact and that political totalitarianism, as horrible as it is, only represents an effect and variant of this fundamental technological fact. While the spokesmen of the technologically advanced world powers have been claiming for decades that they are engaged in resistance against the principle of totalitarianism (in the interest of the “free world”), their claims are fraudulent or, in the best cases, are the effect of a lack of intelligence, for the principle of totalitarianism is a technical principle and, as such, is not fought—nor will it ever be fought—by the “anti-totalitarians” From the times of the dictatorship we know that, from the moment when one considers that it is possible that one is under surveillance, one feels and behaves differently than one did before, that is, in a more conformist way, when not in an absolutely conformist way. The unverifiable possibility of being under surveillance has a decisive capacity for molding: it molds the entire population.”* **Gunther Anders, [The Obsolescence of Man](#), Volume II.**

*“The acceleration of innovation, made possible by an exponential increase in calculating power, led straight to a hyper-technological Ancien Regime where the positions to be occupied in the hierarchy of jobs, incomes, assets, education, living spaces, etc., depend on birth exactly as they did before the French Revolution. Thus, from the transhumanism of Silicon Valley there emerges not a post-human self but a very familiar figure, the aristocrat, having become cyber and with a head, cut off in 1789, that has grown back. Confidence in technology as a means of creating more liberty, more democracy, and less enslavement is belied once more by the truly deplorable actual results of this reproduction of power relations.”* **Maurizio Lazzarato, [Capital Hates Everyone](#)**

### **Artificial Intelligence: Adults**

It is tempting to think that free-will exists. Unfortunately, it does not, particularly in America (tip of the hat to Baruch Spinoza writing in his Ethics). Taste in music (rap, rock, pop, etc.), fashion and food; political orientation whether left, right or center; what sports team to support, or vehicle to drive, or television series to watch is all supplied by media/corporations to American brains that are as malleable as silly putty. The mind easily succumbs to the totalitarian machinations of the American domestic/global capitalist network as its marketers, advertisers, and politicians/ideologues pound content into the brain via television news, hand-held computers/telephones, the world wide web, social media, and legacy media. Alberto J. L. [Carrillo Canan](#) believes that *“the dominant technological forms determine the way we conceive reality, human life and mind.”*

How does one account for a meaningful life in American society? What would be contained in a meaningful life’s ledger? How do you determine if you are free and not programmed? Two days of administered freedom at the end of the workweek? A new car? A two-week vacation at the beach? A mammoth flat screen television? A new iPhone? A new season of a television series on Netflix? A college degree? A mortgage on the house? A yearly bonus for productivity? The ability to vote for only two candidates for the President of the United States? An opinion you really believe is yours?

All these “things” are supplied to you and all courtesy of the bio-capitalist, totalitarian machine. No one can escape it. Young or old, the American mind is captive to the totalitarian technological order. Ideas, products, news and opinions are supplied, recycled/rehashed and delivered. But what about the spontaneous protests and demands of, say, Black Lives Matter (BLM), you ask? Notice how quickly BLM’s agenda was absorbed by the entire totalitarian capitalist enterprise who made easy money available via donations to BLM activists, advertised their cause, and promised to hire more Blacks. BLM is now a fading blip on the American capitalist radar shot down by the capitalist totalitarian system. Indeed, [BLM has cashed in](#). The same story/process is repeated over and over again no matter the issue or the protest or the time.

### ***Not Your Opinion, Your Meaningless Life***

*“It does not matter whether someone who is expressing himself thinks that his expression is his own bona fide expression, or even if he asks himself ‘is this my opinion or not?’, or even if he does not even understand the question; in any case, what is not permitted is that what he expresses should be his own opinion; it must always be a supplied opinion. Even when it seems to be advisable to allow variations, they must be predictable variations on the pre-established theme...Most of those who lead meaningless lives are not even conscious of their misfortune. By way of the life that is imposed upon them they are prevented from perceiving its lack of meaning. That is why they cannot do anything to counteract this lack of meaning, either. Or, more precisely: even what they do to counteract it is something that is done to them, that is, something that is supplied to them,”* claims Anders.

According to Lazaratto, Google, Amazon, Facebook, Apple and Microsoft (plus [consolidated media](#)) are the masters guiding the behaviors of the governed. “By constantly soliciting one’s attention—giving rise to an activity as absurd as compulsively consulting one’s smartphone...they tirelessly fabricate and information designed to affect subjectivities circulating through billions of telephones, televisions, computers, tablets, whose connections envelop the planet in a thicker and thicker net.”

It is not just the corporations though. Republicans, Democrats, the US Military, interest groups, and lobbyists (collectively, the neoliberal order) all get their products/messages on the airwaves and into the minds of the American human herd. The “masters” would likely be happier automating/digitizing American citizens/slaves.

### ***Glutaraldehyde Fixation: Duh, What?***

The digital dissection of the human being, individually and collectively, is proceeding apace. Uploading “the human” is no longer the stuff of science fiction. In a few generations, a parent may say to a child, “Hey, let’s upload great grandpa and see/hear what he has to say.” Why not pull the brain out of a dead body, preserve it in a special solution, and then mine it for memories that can be turned into 0’s and 1’s.

Macabre, you likely say, but the research is underway and funded. Ah, the beauty of capitalism. Consider the enterprising company [Nectome](#). They are in the business of preserving the brains of the dead in hopes of digitally retrieving long term memories.

According to MIT Technology Review, *“Nectome has received substantial support for its technology, however. It has raised \$1 million in funding so far, including the \$120,000 that Y Combinator provides to all the companies it accepts. It has also won a \$960,000 federal grant from the U.S. National Institute of*

*Mental Health for “whole-brain nanoscale preservation and imaging,” the text of which foresees a “commercial opportunity in offering brain preservation” for purposes including drug research.”*

Tracking [digital footprints](#) and then converting them into behavioral models able to predict the next set of keystrokes, online and offline habits/geolocations, and spending preferences are well known practices undertaken by companies like Alphabet-Google. For example, today’s software programs learn what words an individual uses to compose letters, articles, emails and once enough verbiage has been collated by the machine, a human writer can cut out the thought process used to seek out an adjective, a noun or verb. Just one more human function taken away from the brain and absorbed by the software in the machine.

In some not to distant future, the human mind/person *will be* digitized and exist in a bio-machine.

### **Artificial Intelligence: Youngsters**

What kind of adults are being created by the totalitarian technological education system? I used to believe that an innovative education based on critical thinking and systems analysis, beginning from about 4<sup>th</sup> grade level through high school, might provide a check on the monstrous technology/system that is dominating every facet of life.

But having experience education as a teacher in both public and private settings, I have stopped believing that youngsters are going to be anything more than unconscious routers, servers, or surveillance sensors for the totalitarian machine. They will be more conformist than their parents or the adults that are nominally in charge of the United States.

The teachers/system set a pace that is relentless which means there is no time for a pause or a gaze into thoughtfulness/thinking. It is not learning but programming that the students are subjected to.

I asked an 8<sup>th</sup> grader recently what he would change about school if he could. “I would not teach boring,” he responded. “All the students I know don’t like school because it is so boring. Teachers need to change. We are not learning anything,” he said in frustration. Add to this the crazy reality that the World Wide Web is barely used by teachers for science, math, politics, history, or geography. It is largely a cut and paste enterprise with teachers selecting documents from the Web, printing them out in paper form, and distributing them to their classes.

The public and private schools I have been in (K-12) are a dizzying mish-mash of things and frenetic human activity: wires, electronic white boards; non-ergonomic 19<sup>th</sup> Century desks and chairs (plastic and aluminum); Apple iPads; robotic parts; Lego’s; classrooms adorned with cardboard signs with annoying cliches (You’re Special or The Future Starts Here); laptops; boxes of crayons and pencils; decade old paper files in equally old file cabinets; hallway banners proclaiming “Award Winning School, 2020”; half empty classrooms due to the COVID19 Pandemic; virtual students on Microsoft Teams at home who log in and leave the class, never responding to a teacher’s question; layers of management (assistant principals); constant teacher meetings/professional development courses; waves of substitute teachers; and curriculum focused solely on achieving high scores on a State’s Standards of Learning.

Many of the software programs used for learning, particularly in grades K-8, are equivalent to an arcade game or pinball machine: carnival music accompanies the student through, say, a science lesson. Answer correctly and the sound of a bell or whistle can be heard. Answer a question wrong and later a “power

up” function gives you a chance to correct your mistake and add points. There are also competitive learning games that students participate in. Cartoonish software programs like Kahoot, Nearpod, Gizmo, Quizizz, Brain Pop all amp up the level of excitement to create an experience similar to a popular video game.

I was substituting in an 8<sup>th</sup> grade science class recently where the subject being taught was weather. I asked the students if the teacher was using the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA.GOV) website to help them learn about the subject. They looked at me like I was an alien creature. “What’s that,” one student responded. I explained but to no avail as I had to get to the instructions left by the teacher that I was to follow.

### **Red Guards**

I was substitute teaching in a classroom full of 8<sup>th</sup> graders (12-13 years old, I am 65) not long ago. I was talking about something or other and inadvertently pulled my mask down below my lips for a few moments exposing my face. It was an error in judgement, a mistake for which I had no excuse (I am fully vaccinated for COVID19 and was 6 feet away from the nearest student). When I was finished speaking to the class, I pulled my mask back up and thought nothing of it.

Turns out that I was surreptitiously being recorded by a student who turned the video over to an assistant principal. I was nearly released for the mistake but the assistant principal that first received the video argued on my behalf to the principal and I was kept on staff. My punishment was to write a memo for record/file explaining what I had done. The next step was to apologize to the 8<sup>th</sup> graders in person.

I thought immediately of [Mao’s Red Guards](#): *“The first Red Guards groups were made up of students, ranging from as young as elementary school children up to university students...The Red Guards also publicly humiliated teachers, monks, former landowners or anyone else suspected of being “counter-revolutionary.”*

What happened to, “Hey, Mr. Stanton, you need to put your mask back up.”

Not long ago, I was in a class with a new substitute teacher, fresh out of college. He politely asked the class of 6<sup>th</sup> graders what time the class ended. What he got was this from a student, *“You are the substitute, you should know.”*

***John Stanton can be reached at [jstantonarchangel@gmail.com](mailto:jstantonarchangel@gmail.com)***