

Let Education Save the Earth! Towards the Realization of New Sustainable Forms of Humanistic Education

Stefan Grigorov

I believe that education, therefore, is a process of living and not a preparation for future living. I believe that education is the fundamental method of social progress and reform.

—John Dewey, 1897

It is not the duty of science and scholars to create the weapons and technologies that have devastated and are obliterating the life on this planet and it itself! As a result of this misappropriated sense of task, Earth-wide “cataclysms” have been triggered and unleashed. But, on the other hand, it is the duty of education to ensure maximal opportunities of interaction between all people for ending the indiscriminate, insensate, and accelerated destruction, exploitation, and devaluation of humanity and nature.

AN ADDRESS TO READERS

DEAR READER,

It can be asked: what is the sense behind the effort of so much writing concerned with ending the most intolerable conditions and unsustainable institutions; about saving the Earth, and with it—reason, by humanizing education and science?

And moreover, if you and your friends are outside of education, if you have no opportunity to study at a university or no wish, if the university looks like an evil enterprise, a madness industry, a market...if humane studies are in themselves tales written by people who just desire to become famous and rich, crazy careerists who are out of contact with the most sincere needs of life, people, and nature...then what?

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What I will propose with this essay is to seriously retrieve education for the traditions furthering democracy!

There is no other purpose for growing exigent humanistic ideas, theories, efforts and practices but for them to become: a physical reality that is transforming another physical reality; a new sustainable world that is replacing another world; an ubiquitous and tangible revolution of common sense, liberation, and democracy in which everybody can partake and benefit.

These efforts have really become myriad worlds in themselves, through their growth and development, but the time has come to unite the efforts and organize the revolution of reason at the highest stage, as a revolution through which to usher in a qualitatively different form of reality and social perspectives.

The biggest transformation of human species that has ever taken place is now here, in us, “who are threatened with annihilation and asked to threaten others with the same” (Kahn, 2008, pg. 1), youth and adults, students and scholars, people of all races and all states. Inevitably, then, the great revolution for survival and sanity has begun, and this is a revolution of and for education, of the university and the people connected to it responding responsibly to the question: “will we be smashed to splinters upon the polluted beach of no tomorrow” (Kahn, 2008, pg. 1)?

Attention: Education estranged from reason and the people, and science organized by the insanity of armed, corporate, and enslaving powers, have marked the bygone deadly destructive war century of the last 100 years. But...

The emancipatory spirit of the university and its members has survived, and is here again!

The powers of reason are straggly and sometimes caricatured, on the domestic as well as on the global stage, but are obliged to transcend the narrow spirit and unite!

This essay is aimed at revealing the essence of education as a social phenomenon, its purport and its “heart;” it addresses the evident role education has to play in the new “world risk society.” In a world in which states, governments, and military industries not only do not resolve the problems of people but also lead humanity on the brink of fatal multidimensional crisis, on the brink of global rupture, and unregulated destruction, I argue that it is perfectly reasonable to see education as an exigent humanizing public power (on the domestic and world stage) which has to take itself seriously! The only way this can be realized is to rethink and renew education as a world project of students, scholars, and people everywhere—a participatory humane project that can revive reason and democracy on the international stage.

The problems of such “re-creation” of education as a world-humanizing project resemble the problems of Plato’s heroes stranded in the cave (Plato, 514-517b). Closed in the cave from

the early days of their life, they do not believe that there is another sunny world beyond the cave; their reason insists for them that they are mere “shadows”...as corporate culture supplies students today with the notion that they are mere shadows of capital’s requirements, without substance or autonomy on their own. People of the cave deride leaving the cave itself as they have already some “status” within it, as some deride the leaving of our doomed world of exploitation, war, terror...when they have at least a “career” there.

At the same time, however, the new role education has to play is an objective historic process engaged with strong material forces. It is not the case that once it has reached out to the spring of new ideas for a safe and sustainable world that nothing can stop the unfolding of such reason. Rather, it is that our cave is on fire now and if we do not forswear it, we will staggeringly lose ourselves and our future generations.

Humanity in Peril, Education on the Alert

Thus, our moment is new—never before have the collected mass beings of the planet Earth been so thoroughly threatened with extinction as they are now and never before have so many of us raised this problem consciously and desperately together in the hopes of transforming society towards a better...Yet, education remains a primary institution towards affecting social and ecological change for the better...”

—Kahn, 2008

“The brutal practices of slavery, the exploitation of child labor, the sanctioning of the cruelest work conditions in the mines and sweat shops of America and abroad, and the destruction of the environment” (Giroux, 2002), the extreme politics of incessant war spectacle and global pillage and the way they devalue humanity—these become the fundamental problems of education. Representative politics, such as we know it today—a super-action of the rich, the armed, models, muggers, and clowns—is always class politics, will never alleviate these problems of education, and what is more it will even catalyze and organize these problems so that political rulers can enjoy the benefits. Thomas Paine warned us against such forms of government, “from them, what could be expected but a continued system of war and extortion, perpetual system of war and expense, that drains the country, and defeats the general felicity of which civilization is capable” (Paine, 1792). But these problems are ultimately in our hearts and *our hearts are the soul of education*.

Undertaking this study, let us harbor no illusion that educational efforts are anything but meaningless and spirit crushing if they are intended to serve any system of exploitation and injustice, or if they are directed to perfect and internalize the false economy of war and fear, exploitation and devaluation. We observe now how education provides students “referred to as customers and consumers” with the knowledge that “they need to sell themselves to the highest bidder” (Giroux, 2002). We tremble under the educational demands that create a milieu in which “the ruled tend not only to submit to the rulers, but also to reproduce in themselves their subordination” (Marcuse, 1969, pg. 191) by the means of “false rewards” and “false needs,” false

knowledge and false jobs. Isn't this a new era of self-assimilation, self-exploitation, and self-humiliation, a techno-organized epoch of ignominious "transformations of man" (Mumford, 1956) and ignominious transformation of freedom?

In reality, more and more, universities are being turned into and discredited as commercial enterprises that treat "knowledge as something to be consumed passively, taken up merely to be tasted, or legitimated outside of an engaged normative discourse" (Giroux, 2002). Therein, students are commercial adjuncts, products which charge the industries and bow to the requirements of a false economy and circulation of capital. This notion of students and educators who have to "compete" in order to realize and internalize the plans and the will of the establishment rests on the acquiescent anti-democratic perception of their very society as nothing more than a "privatized" postmodern factory. Utterly dehumanized within such an institutional matrix they are gathered together as beings without reason, lacking voice, and robbed of the impulse to participate in the determination of their own human situation.

We must confront this cynical thinking and the use of the loftiest human institutions for the vilest commercial projects. Thus, we now take on the duty to find new forms of theorizing and organizing education that can provide educands with the skills and rights not to sell or surrender themselves to "the most intolerable conditions and institutions" (Marcuse, 1968, pg. 256). Rather, we must learn to change them and their shameful sources, through an educational program that is pragmatic, aimed at improving everyday life and society—an education in which one would learn by doing, by using the method of trial and error, through which one could learn important life skills, and gradually improve democratic society and education.

Everyone should have access to education for democracy to work (Dewey, 1916). This would be education free from the elitist, idealistic, class-corporate, romantic, enslaving, and mesmerizing aspects of culture that divide thought from action, and which "elevate the mind over the body, the superior individual over the masses and thus undermine democracy, citizenship, and the project of developing a just society" (Kellner, 2003b, pg. 4). But the ongoing pressure of the global commercial and military industries on education, on scholars and students all over the world consequently involved in their self-reduction to handmaidens of the corporate war culture of the establishment, will have irremediable end results for us all if those involved in educational projects do not react strikingly.

What I have in mind is that in most of the world education exists and works as a vehicle for the military, for commercialism, and for the social reproduction of exploitation. We still see how scientists create weapons of mass destruction and privatized sciences help to annihilate people and the Earth, fatally threatening the life of this planet in the name of false needs such as money. Likewise, scholars in the social sciences routinely conceal the manifest exploitation rampant in society, as economists often try to persuade people to commodify and debase themselves in the name of profit.

As such, we are living in a world risk society in which massively deadly threats are being re-produced for the primary purpose of underwriting the scientific power of the establishment (Marcuse, 1968, pg. ix; Beck, 1998). Increasingly, there is the milieu of airless streets, citizen rights emptied of freedom and value, starving children, subordinated and mesmerized people, tantalized fans and "nations of the spectacle" (Kellner, 2003c), as well as Net ghettos. Most

alarmingly the clear symptom that results from this is the all-pervasive ecological catastrophe that is swelling with the pace of the day through the production and use of more and more weapons and wars.

In this strained historical moment, a moment in which there are no obvious powers to stop this hyper-dimensional collapse, the force of education appears on the horizon as “a humanizing force in society where the value of people is always a priority” (Giroux, 2002). Education, then, appears as a source of hope in global politics—a place for the advent of human reason and its power, on behalf of a peoples’ project, united by their right to live freely and sustainably.

Education or Exploitation, Change or Acquiescence: Why Do We Study?

There is a reason which we will no longer accept, there is an appearance of wisdom which horrifies us!

—Marcuse, 1968, pg. 256

Wrigley (2007) writes, “Capitalism has always had a problem with education. Since the early days of mass schooling for working-class children, the ruling class has needed to increase the skills of future workers but is afraid they might become articulate, knowledgeable and rebellious.” As current observations indicate, “many schools now serve as personal offices for corporations” (Giroux, 2002). It is worth considering the degree to which education trains students in habits of industry and market fundamentalism today (Palattella, 2001), as well as theorizing the structural consequences of this development.

Put simply, it would appear that a venture through which we might achieve the greater humanization of experience has instead been diverted toward the “reformulation of social issues as strikingly individual or economic issues... Public spheres are replaced by commercial spheres as the substance of critical democracy is emptied out and replaced by a democracy of goods, consumer life styles, shopping malls, and the increasing expansion of the cultural and political power of corporations throughout the world” (Giroux, 2002). What does this look like in practice? Let me provide an example:

The existence and perfection of impudent enslavement, bold exploitation, and perpetual war are obvious social and civil problems. These are social issues as they directly concern the degrees of freedom achievable by each person in the society in which they occur. Moreover, they often affect persons in other societies too as global economic and political networks now generally relate the issues of one society to another. Therefore, everyone potentially feels the weight and affects of social degeneration. Yet, if everybody answers to the spirit of market neoliberalism, corporate statism, and media spectacle, then everyone will in theory be required to out compete others to obtain a career that will hopefully insulate him/herself from enslavement, exploitation, and war; or rather, he/she will seek work toward the top of this hierarchy of exploitation, enslavement, and war. In other words, out of fear of the system, people can easily be made to individually serve, maintain, and perfect it! This is an example of how a social issue is reformulated as an individual and economic issue to our social detriment.

This educational escape from social freedom and civic courage has some radical *psychological* effects for students, careerists, and society as a whole. One of these effects is the mass production of violent “guys and guns amok”—as Douglas Kellner (2008) has written, in a culture in which “a lot of people have mental health problems” and students are “so alienated that they want to be something” there is a dangerous tendency towards unstable acts of murderous suicide. It is also worth noticing Lewis Mumford’s (1964) warnings about “reducing man to a mere shadow of the machine he had created, and reducing technological development to private processes of insanity fatally unregulated by society and its need for normal life.” As he synthesized more than fifty years ago:

We have lost the essential capacity of self-governing persons – the freedom to make decisions, to say Yes or No in terms of our own purposes – so that, though we have vastly augmented our powers, though the high development of technics, we have not developed the [public] capacity to control those powers in any proportionate degree.

As a result, our very remedies are only further symptoms of the disease itself.

Why has our inner life become so impoverished and empty, and why has our outer life become so exorbitant, and in its subjective satisfaction even more empty. Why have we become technological gods and moral devils, scientific supermen and esthetic idiots – idiots, that is, primarily, in the Greek sense of being wholly private persons, incapable of communicating with each other or understanding each other (Mumford, 1964a, pp. 136-138).

Thus, this is the charge for a reconstructed vision for education! This is a matter of actualizing humanistic education and its historic accountability!

But how do students perceive this problem? The great majority of the students I know declare that the most shameful aspect of the current educational institutions is that students are seen as exploitable human resources, requiring top-down management, similar to any other kind of resources! In this vein, I myself wrote when I started study at the university level, “The underlying value for the sake of which the educational system exists and acts – is humanity. It is inadmissible for education to uphold a political system in which people have a human capital status of “live resources,” or that they are prepared to be members of a global slave-holding order in which people are not so much exploited but exploiters who are brought up with this aim.”

To maximize energy, speed, or automation, without reference to the complex conditions that sustain organic life, these have become ends in themselves. As with the earliest forms of authoritarian technics, the weight of effort, if one is to judge by national budgets, is toward absolute instruments of destruction, designed for absolutely irrational purposes whose chief by-product would be the mutilation or extermination of the human race and that which supports it.

Under such conditions, can democracy in any form survive? The question is absurd: life itself will not survive, except which is funneled through and imploded into the mechanical collective.

We who are interested in liberatory education must ask, not what is good for big science or technology, still less what is specifically good for General Motors or Union Carbide or IBM or the Pentagon, but what is good for humanity: “not machine-conditioned, system-regulated, mass-man, but man in person, moving freely over every area of life” (Mumford, 1964b). Education must neither permit business and enterprises to form students in the way they want to, so that they can have “better employees,” nor must it itself form students as products who will be traded later into the system, who will be deprived “of the unique experience of a creative moment in life (Mumford, 1964a, pg. 139).

The potential vested in students and education is not lost despite the horrific realization of the establishment’s insanity and authoritarian norms favoring state-protected economies of exploitation, ecodevastation, and global pillaging. This is an enormous, living, and vibrant potential that serves nature through its opposition to contemporary forms of false economics based on exploitation, war and pillage, and their corresponding establishment of quasi-democratic institutions. This potential increases and thrives to the degree that it is called upon to actively create an alternative world with new direct democratic institutions, appropriate technologies, and a social system predicated upon a democratic economy. While utopian, let it be stressed: this is the only realistic way! This is the task for students and others involved in education today: to continue the conditions for life tomorrow.

I would not hesitate to theorize that if some scholars or students have already taken themselves seriously as an information commodity or market resource, this is tragedy. If youth go to study in order to prepare themselves to become human capital for the establishment, it is tragedy. If people try to adapt themselves to the principles and whims of corporate culture and its performance principle, for maximizing profit through the exploitation and annihilation of nature and all other such stupidities, it is tragedy. If corporate men and their privatized sciences give funding and lecture on how to maximize capital through the commodification of dead objects, dead goods, and dead realities based in the obliteration of living beings and nature, tell these people that they are the first appearances of “dead humanity.” In cities, in which living ecosystems are minimized or abolished and converted into non-living realities, so called “capitalist cultural spaces” by Marcuse, physiologically speaking only some kind of “dead human” can remain and “exist.” Part slave, part technology, dead humanity is a functionally integrated element of the world of death-dealing systems.

And again, if corporate “professors,” developers, or commercialized knowledge producers advise on how to transmute and annihilate living places and realities into “rich” spaces based in murder, and *so demand to use the university and science for this purpose* and thereby subjugate the university and its potential to corporate globalization, it is insanity and we do not want education itself to become a space of practice beyond the bounds of sanity.

If even psychology and psychologists, today privatized, hired, or trained by big monopolistic business, are not healing the psychopathology of the corporations, but are instead advertizing it as a model to imitate and forge a career upon...or if these psychologists

concentrate on “healing” employees who show no initiative for the destructive economy, or teenagers who reject their inadequate school values, and students of all ages declare war on the commoditization of human beings and a world of hi-tech pillage, lecture en masse on:

How to internalize and integrate external corporate requirements as one’s own intrinsic motivation, through methods of autosuggestion, self-abnegation for the sake of careerist pseudo-autonomy, self-assimilation, and self-exploitation;

How to be happy in an objectively unhappy, devastated world, and to enthusiastically pander to its destructive powers;

How to say “Yes!” to the madness that is obliterating life on this planet and how to perfect yourself in the habits of this craziness and its laws, then...we have gone astray quite seriously.

Education must end this global psychology of exploitation, this global psychology of acquiescence, this global psychology of anti-reasoning. Education should create and develop a new ecopsychology of resistance, and a psychology of non-exploitation. Here, I do not seek in the least to oversimplify psychology as a simple one-dimensional science, but what is fatal is namely that psychology in its full and great complexity is now clearly subjugated and misdirected to one-dimensional ends! It fails and turns into a baleful commercial enterprise that operates using the depoliticized knowledge that “what a man does depends largely upon his definition of situation” (Shibutani, 1972, pg. 63).

We must seriously retrieve education for the traditions of democracy, in this century this is a matter of life and death!

Henry Giroux (2002) writes, “Fundamental to the rise of the vibrant democratic culture is the recognition that education must be treated as a public good, as a crucial site where students gain a public voice and come to grips with their own power as individual and social agents.” In the other “exploitative” case, students and educators are stranded and exist in the vacuum of corporate culture and its media spectacle causing dangerous forms of alienation and aggressive frustration (Kellner, 2008). Thus, they forget that “Life itself in its fullness and wholeness cannot be delegated” (Mumford, 1964b, pg. 1). They lose track of themselves and the most important feature of their very existence—to be able to govern and change their human situation and by taking up collective action in the name of social justice, freedom, direct democracy, peace, and sustainability.

The role of education in the new world risk society is to inspire, to give impetus to students to construct vigorous theories and practices demonstrating sanity, to inspire civic participation, and support participatory democracy.

In this context, special attention should be given to Richard Kahn’s project for furthering ecopedagogy—“a broad-based pedagogy of liberation for Animals, Nature, and the Oppressed people of the Earth” (Kahn, 2008)—which reminds me of some words attributed to the Indian Chief Seattle:

The beasts are our brothers, and we kill only to stay alive. If all the beasts were gone, men would die from *great loneliness of spirit*, for whatever happens to the beasts happens to man, for we are all of one breath. All things are connected.

Whatever befalls the Earth, befalls the sons and daughters of the Earth. Man did not weave the web of life; he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself.

Our present proves more and more that whatever happens to animals and nature happens also to human society. Thus, ecopedagogy marks the beginning of a radical regeneration of ecological accountability, human actualization, and participatory politics as democratic education.

Kahn's project is an excellent example of how education can be renewed as a humane project reviving sanity and civic courage; do partake! Though it is not an end, I would argue; rather, it is only the beginning of a revisioned education for a world participatory project of students, scholars and people fighting for a better and more sustainable future.

Otherwise, everybody has heard about the myths I have already scrutinized, about how universities conform with the plans of the establishment and have become pillars of mental and spiritual imbalance...how educational institutions must model themselves after corporations if they are to survive. It is not our choice to fight, the ideological subordination and violence against education has been brought to us—it is a war of commercial and military insanity against civic courage and ecological democracy. Thus, we should argue now that it is perfectly realistic to “ignite the revolution” of education so that people can raise their “voices in defense of the Earth” (Best & Nocella, 2006).

Reflection on Reality and History

This century “ascribes education a central role in every aspect of life” (Kellner 2003a: 1). I will put it directly:

Now education faces its exigent duty to provide people with the spirit, knowledge, and skills to curb the devastating forces over our Earth, on the domestic and global stage, as well as expand participatory democracy to such a degree that people can get control over their government and stop destructive policies. Education becomes nothing less than a world project of people to survive in this dangerous and intricate time, to recover reason on the earth as well as to recover themselves on the stages of domestic and international decision-making. In short, what is “at stake is not simply the future of higher education and the nature of critical democracy itself” (Giroux, 2002), but the future of sanity, humanity, and all-embracing nature.

In my opinion, globally threatening eco-political effects are being produced daily, wholly out of proportion with people's ability to survive, and humanity can no longer view these global effects as political pathologies without clear cause. If one argues that this is a radical project, as I conceptualize, it is far more radical to allow your taxes and everyday life to go for supporting war, “domestic terror,” labor exploitation, eco-destruction, total surveillance, and the general decay of humane and sustainable values.

Yet, in attempting to renew education and its powers as a humanizing element on the domestic and world stage, to perfect education that is a sovereign project of people, democracy, and reason and their common advent, we run into education that is used to legitimate “slave

societies” and promote the empire of capital. Corporate powers commercially insist on “elevating” the university as a source of “the overexploited consumer consciousness that inevitably grows into intellectual self-decay. This is the information society. As Kellner (2003a, pg. 9) has written, “Allan and Carmen Luke have argued that current educational systems, curricula, and pedagogies were designed for the production of a laboring subject who has become an “endangered species” in the current economic, social, and cultural systems.” Moreover, even in humanistic fields of knowledge we now are dealing increasingly with disciplinary controls—we see “the existing system of education as a mode of reproduction of the existing system of domination and oppression” (Marcuse, *The Radical Movement*).

Historically, then, two basically contradicting kinds of education can be examined:

- 1) education that stems from the hearts and efforts of people to construct and live sensible lives in just societies (here educational institutions trend toward justice and democracy);
- 2) education which is directly based on the interests of some ruling class which creates and finances curricula to be taught that not only produce the general ideology of subordination but also *train students to reproduce their subordination as their institutions themselves reproduce the values and norms of the establishment.*

Historically, in the second situation, people have had to dissociate themselves from the educational structure of the hegemonic class; have had to create their own universities and educational institutions; have had to educate themselves by developing the “pedagogy of the oppressed,” the “pedagogy of indignation,” and the “pedagogy of freedom” as did Freire (Kellner, 2003, pg. 6). By contrast, people under the yoke of rulers have had to found “the school of freedom” (Paine, 1792) and had to engage in building revolutions and free democratic societies. In fact, this was the process at work behind many of the nation-states and democratic traditions in the world.

Now, “What is surprising about the current attack on education, especially in light of the growing corporatization and privatization at all levels of schooling, is the refusal on the part of many theorists to rethink the role academia might play in defending the university as a crucial democratic public sphere,” writes Giroux (2000). But this is not a process fatal and limited to our present only. Throughout the history of society, the establishment “treasurers,” as a rule, hire, buy or establish the majority of the thinkers and critics in society...The purpose of the thinkers so hired was not to criticize the sources and the essence of social corruptness, but to preordain people’s inaction through the creation of social myths and cultural spectacle. So, they did not tend to be “men against myth” but aspired to be “thinkers of treasurers, of the rulers of society” (Dunham, 1947; 1955).

Religious spectacle, terror spectacle, sex spectacle—“The spectacle is the moment when consumption has attained the total occupation of social life” (Guy Debord in Kellner, 2003c, pg. 4). Irresponsible intellectuals contribute to producing a moment when people do not think, do not demand, and do not create themselves (or at all)! Indeed, we should notice that the ruling classes in the hitherto existing societies were in themselves a mental spectacle of maimed fantasies,

organized frustrations, and aberrations also. It is the same or worse today. But what is shocking is that many famous “people of culture” and even educators appear in the culture industry and classroom in a deformed, demoralized, or caricatured state—seeking to be denizens of commercial “styles,” a spectacular model of imitation, glamour and narcissism.

There is crisis at hand! Yet, this implies an alternative is possible.

“The potential disaster of education for sustainable development” (Kahn, 2007: pp. 364-7) is on the horizon. We must take into account that we now exist by prolonging perpetual risks on the domestic and global stage. Either education will be a project that promotes the empire of capital, destroying ecology and all humane institutions through militaristic and exploitative endeavors, or education will more and more appear as a public project, a liberatory inquiry of the people which is “the key to strong, egalitarian, participatory democracy and thus to the good life and good society” (Kellner, 2003a, pg. 5).

The time to renew education and its democratizing role through the realization of its innermost function has come—it is a project combining the reason and humanity of all people, transcending borders of states, classes, ethnoi, and so on. This is not a left project, this is not a right project, this is the very duty of education, human reason, and organized dignity. This is a project that will unite students, scholars and people beyond any frontiers and any differences, uniting them against forms of exploitation, devaluation, and the devastation of humanity and nature.

This is a big human project of the new millennium; a great hope of humanity to survive, a humanizing revolution everybody can engage in. Now “choosing is creating.” Yes: choosing is creating! Blind commercial perspectives confront our identities as people in a healthy state, people who take life seriously, as something sacred and potentially significant; and as people who necessarily take themselves seriously, too, as transmitters of life and as creators (Mumford, 1964a: pp. 110, 140).

The Project of the University – An Exigent Project of Sanity and Human Democracy; A Big Human Project

Firstly

We will strive to construct a critical and creative theory/practice of society capable of encompassing all concepts that could bridge the gap between the present and a sustainable future; filled with promise and revealing powerful examples of obtained success, this set of theory and practice will remain positive and participatory.

Secondly

“Academics should engage in ongoing forms of permanent critique of all abuses of power or authority,” “to enter into sustained and vigorous exchange with the outside world”, as a larger project of helping “to create the social conditions for the collective production of realist utopias”

“(Chomsky; Said; Bourdieu, cited in Giroux, 2002). We should organize to establish a World Manifesto of Responsible Researchers and Students.

If the scientific community fails to do it, or does not take it seriously in the slightest, it should be asserted that they have become the new ideologically subordinated working class of hi-tech society, a class that produces the deadly weapons and social perils, that carries out the whims of the establishment; one that persuades society to need and approve of destructive production and sinister ivory towers erecting an empire of posthuman capitalism and “our posthuman future” (see Fukuyama’s well-based but unfortunately semi-realized fears, 2002). It is undoubtedly tragic that “too many academics have retreated into narrow specialisms that serve largely to consolidate authority rather than critique its abuses” (Giroux, 2002). Again, in this strained historic moment when humanity is perched on the edge—choosing is creating!

Thirdly

In the line with the critical theory and practice of society which students, scholars, and people have to create and realize, they must also *detect, criticize, and end the abuses and insanity of powerful authorities by taking up collective action*. By organizing their power and that of the university (and other educational institutions) on both the domestic and international stage, people have to organize a new scientific direction—a new science with which to spark off, unite, and realize humanistic creativity and ecological responsibility.

It is proper to name it – “The Project of Possible Worlds.” This is a science of democracy. We have to elaborate this new direction of science as a project for students, scholars and people in which *they declare their democratic inquiries for making life more bearable and better on the domestic and world stage*.

By strengthening the critical, democratically accountable directions in education, and by creating a new sustainable science for “Possible Worlds,” we could strikingly reconstruct education as a participatory worldwide project for humanity and as a public-oriented democratizing project for the world.

Fourthly

Students and scholars need to join with people in the community and with social movements around the common platform of public-oriented participatory sustainability education as a pillar of democracy. They should organize to establish a bill of rights for students, scholars and other citizens, to defend the very rights that are now seized by the establishment, its military industries and capitalist corporations.

Students and scholars must enlist the help of diverse communities, local and federal governments, and any progressive groups to ensure that public institutions of higher education are adequately supported to help create a better world for everyone, as again this project goes directly counter to the overt will of the establishment and the military. This axiom is based mainly on Giroux’s ideas concerning “educating students for active and critical citizenship.” What he says is most essential:

But such protests cannot be limited to either the sphere of higher educators or to faculty and students. Educators, parents, legislators, students, and social activists from a variety of sites need to come together to defend the institutions of higher education as indispensable to the life of the nation because they are one of the few public spaces left where students can learn the power of and engage in the experience of democracy. In the face of corporate takeovers, the ongoing commodification of curriculum, and the transformation of students into consumers, such a project requires that educators mount a collective struggle to reassert the crucial importance of higher education in offering students the skills they need for learning how to govern and take risks, while developing the knowledge necessary for deliberation, reasoned arguments, and social action. At issue here is providing students with an education that allows them to recognize the dream and promise of a substantive democracy, particularly the idea that as citizens they are “entitled to public services, decent housing, safety, security, support during hard times, and most importantly, some power over decision making” (Giroux, 2002).

Fifthly

It is sadly funny to see how now, in the new millennium, our planet is being turned into the wasted land of war, terror, and insanity and in response many people just wonder or sigh! We must have a process of education committed to end the radicalized ideology of unfreedom and its institutions, to destroy the destructive powers and dogmas that are threatening the human race and so many other species. We must have education and a science full of love, impetus, and future hope, attuned to our human situation and all life, which is what Kahn offers with the ecopedagogy project. As part of this, could it be that what we might realize is the creation of an *Ecological University for the People’s World Organization (EUPWO)*. Such would accord with Giroux’s (2007) thinking that “Higher education will have to develop global organizations that can be mobilized to erect a culture of peace.”

EUPWO would organize its own powerful media. Owned by the universities and people, unprivatizable, this democratic media would act as the “1st world’s humane channel” devoted to organizing planetary survival by opposing wars, social exploitation, degradation of the human spirit, ecodestruction, and it would popularize images and work on behalf of “another possible world.”

EUPWO would develop a program for the development and transformation of *Ecological Architecture* (constructing new eco-cities and sustainable buildings), *Appropriate Technics* (discontinuing authoritarian and unsustainable technics in favor of democratic technics and technologies), *Ecological Economics* (economic development is not an end in itself; but to develop a lasting peace-based economy), *Nature-Cultures* (developing participatory, creative, “living culture”), *Democratic Journalism* (erecting unprivatizable media), *Budgetcontrology* (organizing just/egalitarian, anti-war, and eco-budgets), *Community-based Health and Medicine*,

and all other spheres of public life. This is a program for great transformation—a “Program for our Social Future.”

EUPWO would retrieve reason as a pro-Earth demand, and would transform the world in some years through its deployment.

EUPWO would be created and represented by students and educators from universities all over the world, as well as by members of the general population with an interest in informal education, since universities are not self-contained but rather civic institutions which have to defend the public’s existence and resolve its real problems, both locally and globally.

The consequences of the fulfillment of the exigent project named “EUPWO”, are:

1. Society’s democratic control over the fundamental goods – e.g., water, land, forests, air, other aspects of the planetary commons...
2. That the preconditions would be established for the development of a safe and just society in which nature and future generations well-being would be safeguarded.

We, the researchers, scientists, educators, and students, of all places, have to immediately organize to elaborate and found what would amount to the “EUPWO Manifesto.” In so doing, we will demonstrate our utopian freedom to believe that no corrupt government or many-spectacled society, no deranged plutocratic classes, and no army working on their behalf will be able to stop the force of democracy and freedom when students, educators, researchers, scientists and civic-minded people all over the world march forward together to create a free, eco-based and directly democratic planetary society. The time has come!

Sanity on the Stage of Education and the Global Stage

We should seriously consider the fact that “all societies are already an integral part of one community of shared risks” (Habermas, 1996), that the interpenetration and interaction of societies are new global forces that must be contended with at the level of organization and activism. I would therefore ask:

Is it reasonable to see education as a peoples’ world participatory project for survival and progress in this dangerous and rude time, a project for saving the Earth before the neobarbaristic powers have fatally disturbed it and have deranged and wiped out the human race?

Is it reasonable to renew education as a project of the people to recover reason on the earth through the recovery of democratic participation; to restore the force, freedom, and promise of the university as an institution for reason and sustainable science through the manifestation of EUPWO?

Is it reasonable to realize education as a project for our great transformation and the more robust regulation of all domestic and global perils that threaten planetary security and the life of any one person?

My opinion, as a young person who respects the potential of research and science as an outgrowth of the human spirit, is “Yes!” The opinion of the young will prove to be, “Yes!” The

children in kindergarten scream in their hearts, “Yes!” We all want to live in a safe and peaceful world. Our education should only be but for to organize the possibility of bringing about such a world and so to realize the philosophical good life!

Now, I would argue that this “big human project” is a project with no borders and no internal limitations. This project has no business kowtowing to the “real world” of business and it need not conform with any regressive or militaristic powers. Simply put: it does not recognize their right to existence, as neither does it recognize the right of existence in the “rulers of societies,” as well as establishment institutions that would ask it to compromise to any degree.

This is the essential project of students, scholars and people all over the world:

To end domestic and global pillage, terror, and exploitation;

To stop all wars for wars are the biggest enemy of an ecology of peace and freedom;

To strikingly curb governments, since “the frivolous matters upon which war is made, shew [show] the disposition and avidity of Governments to uphold the system of war, and betray the motives upon which they act” (Paine, 1992, pg. 52);

And to manage globalization through the courageous replacement of corporate globalization-from-above by humanistic globalization-from-below, a peoples’ globalization. We have entered in a new stage of world politics, one in which people have to consciously take care of the reproduction of their societies, a new epoch in which generations are obliged to stand up for their right to life – this epoch is what I call peoples’ globalization.

In short, this is the re-annunciation of a project of “the most advanced consciousness of humanity [and democracy], and its most exploited force” (Marcuse, 1968, pg. 257). It is a project of worldly reason that can by internal definition have no reasonable opposition!

Human needs and human conscience recognize no laws imposed by the external empire of capital, or any other imperialistic states (of government, mind, or being). Neither does a truly sustainable ecology dare to recognize them.

So, this is a project of the people and a sustainable science for the planet that does not admit of the right of resistance on the part of any regressive forces of domination. It strikingly insists on sweeping away any and all tyrants and governments that do not know that the life of the people is a serious thing which includes ecosystemic well being and the overall thriving of the planetary diversity itself.

I would even argue that if contemporary state regimes in this world continue to function as class states and technocratic systems in which it is mainly the insanity of the rich and armed that creates laws, creates wars, underwrites exploitation, obliterates ecology and human values in order for their members to live as self-imagined gods, then—from each public university to each innocent child—these states have to be actively opposed and replaced once and forever. This is the challenge put to democratic education itself today.

Students, scholars, and citizens the world over have to take a striking part in determining civic and institutional budgets and manage the distribution of wealth. It is the role of education and those that uphold and care for it to stop the budgets for war, private whimsy, and the universalization of oppression, and to instead redirect them into ecological care, people-oriented

prosperity, the strengthening of public education, and the organization of the politics of tangible progress.

As I write this essay, the world is on the brink of a global rupture and unregulated destruction such as is without proper historical comparison! How can any true science be indifferent to these events? Neither can those who are thought to be beyond the realm of science today be people with no strong opinion on what is taking place or mere fans of its spectacular portrayal in the media.

Open your eyes, and look all around you! Our Earth is semi-devastated, people too—wake up! Who cares? It is a sad morning to awaken to but at least realize now that planetary society is in a pernicious form of world wasting. Deranged governments and class systems are *consciously* leading our world to the edge of a stunning ecocatastrophe as well as a new world war—all because it benefits greatly the relative few, and then only them in the short term.

The regressive governmental, military, and corporate establishments, at a global level, appear ready to invent anything in order to remain “rulers of societies” and supposedly omnipotent tyrants. To legitimize their pillage they seem even ready to bomb the world from outer space and declare war on “cosmic enemies,” war on “cosmic terrorists,” fabricated by their media spectacle industry. We should have no doubt that there is no Big Lie they will not tell before it is all said and done.

But we should also have no doubt in that there is ultimately nothing they can do to stop the advent of reason on the world stage. There is nothing that can stop the sweeping away of the powers devastating the Earth. There is nothing that can stop the arising revolution of democracy and education from transforming this world fundamentally and preserving life in all its vibrant dimensions!

Conclusion

Observing the murderous forces of our world, one may think that they are so many, so massive, so brutal, and so organized that there is simply nothing to be done. If one is a fan of media spectacles, hi-technological fantasy, religious mystification, and so exists in a political vacuum packed by one’s masters, then one will have great difficulty in perceiving the destruction of the planet as a current problem—for such a person lives on another planet with other problems requiring handfed solutions.

It is true that the destructive and unjustifiable patterns of our world are well organized and structurally reinforced, but the truth is that their organization finally rests upon nothing but our own “reasons” for reproducing in ourselves our own subordination to them. The masters make the rules in large part because our system of education lets them—the university, as a pillar of “higher education,” subordinates us to social insanity...but only because, in the end, we allow ourselves to be disciplined by it, rather than remaking it through our own knowledge and control. But I believe in democracy. We must believe in democracy and remember Thomas Paine’s advice in “The Rights of Man” where he declared that “Ignorance is of a peculiar nature: once dispelled, it is impossible to re-establish it. It is not originally a thing of itself, but is only the

absence of knowledge; and though man may be kept ignorant, he cannot be made ignorant” (Paine, 1792).

In the absence of knowledge concerning planetary sustainability it is our duty to retrieve and revision the essence of education as a humanizing public force and participatory democratic project. This must be done both on the domestic and world stage—with demonstrated calm, and with reason and care, but all at once and with great seriousness and urgency. Ours is an inevitable victory of sanity and ecological democracy. “Had we a place to stand upon, we might raise the world,” wrote Paine (1792), paraphrasing Archimedes. This place is now coming over the horizon, the horizon-line of human self-realization through education, an education and science full of love, sanity, and future hope, attuned to our human situation and all of life.

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