Neohumanist Educational Futures: Liberating the Pedagogical Intellect

Neohumanist Educational Futures: Liberating the Pedagogical Intellect

Sohail Inayatullah, Marcus Bussey, and Ivana Milojević First published 2006 by Tamkang University in association with Gurukula Press and Metafuture.org.

 $Graduate\ Institute\ of\ Futures\ Studies,\ Tamsui,\ Taipei,\ Taiwan\ 251.\ future@mail.tku.edu.tw,\\ www2.tku.edu.tw/\sim tddx$

Gurukula Press, P. O. Box 879, Maleny, Qld., 4552, Australia. gkpress@gurukul.edu Metafuture.org, info@metafuture.org, www.metafuture.org.

Copyright © 2006. This work is copyright. Copyright in the work as a whole remains with Tamkang University, the editors—Sohail Inayatullah, Marcus Bussey and Ivana Milojević—and contributing authors.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or by any information storage and retrieval system, without prior permission in writing from the publisher or the editors.

1. Inayatullah, Sohail, 1958 –. II. Marcus Bussey. III. Ivana Milojević.

ISBN: 986-7385-63-2

Cover illustration: Detail Kundalini, 2004, by Marjorie Bussey (mbussey@ozemail.com.au)

Additional copies may be obtained from: info@metafuture.org, gkpress@gurukul.edu and future@mail.tku.edu.tw

Contents

Personal Reflections	iii
Introducing Neohumanism	1
Theoretical Context	
Chapter 1 Mapping Neohumanist Futu Marcus Bussey	res in Education Error! Bookmark not defined.
Chapter 2 Neohumanism, Globalisation Vedaprajinananda Avadhuta	n and World Futures Error! Bookmark not defined.
Chapter 3 From Multiculturalism to Ne Politics in Changing Futures	eohumanism: Pedagogy and
Sohail Inayatullah	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Chapter 4 Visions of Education: Neohu Spirituality	manism and Critical
Ivana Milojević	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Chapter 5 Neohumanism: Critical Spiri Marcus Bussey	tuality, Tantra and Education Error! Bookmark not defined.
Perspective 1 Neohumanism in Evolution Prabhat Rainjan Sarkar	onary Context Error! Bookmark not defined.
Situating the Spiritual in Education	
Chapter 6 From Information to Transfo Sages Tell Us Education Can Be	rmation: What the Mystics and
Tobin Hart	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Chapter 7 Education for Transformation Knowledge Society and Beyond	n: Integrated Intelligence in the
Marcus Anthony	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Chapter 8 Collective Violence Pedagog Oriented Response	y and the Neohumanist Peace–
Ivana Milojević	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Perspective 2 An Eclectic Model of Hol	
Shambhushivananda Avadhuta	Error! Bookmark not defined.

Issues in Neohumanist Education

Chapter 9 Partnership Education: Nurturing Children's Humanity Error! Bookmark not defined. Riana Eisler Chapter 10 Futures Beyond Social Cohesion: Lessons for the Classroom Marlene de Beer Error! Bookmark not defined. Chapter 11 Schools, Speciesism, and Hidden Curricula: The Role of Critical Pedagogy for Humane Education Futures Helena Pederson Error! Bookmark not defined. Chapter 12 Pointing toward Benevolence in Education: Indicators in the Subjunctive Mood Vachel Miller Error! Bookmark not defined. Chapter 13 Neohumanist Historiography: Reshaping the Teaching of History Error! Bookmark not defined. Marcus Bussey and Sohail Inayatullah Playing the Neohumanist Game Chapter 14 Peter Hayward and Joseph Voros Error! Bookmark not defined. Perspective 3 Educator of the Oppressed: A Conversation with Paulo Freire Maheshvarananda Avadhuta Error! Bookmark not defined. Neohumanism in Practice Chapter 15 The River School: Exploring Racism in a Neohumanist School Ivana Milojević Error! Bookmark not defined. What is Universalism Really About? Chapter 16 Mahajyoti Glassman Error! Bookmark not defined. The Futures of Neohumanist Education Conclusion Sohail Inayatullah 4 Appendices Error! Bookmark not defined. Glossary of Sanskrit Terms...... Error! Bookmark not defined. About the Contributors...... Error! Bookmark not defined. Index...... Error! Bookmark not defined.

Personal Reflections

Sohail Inayatullah

The origins of this book are varied. For me, they are both professional and personal, and in the spaces outside these two defining but confining categories.

The traces of this book certainly go back to a special issue of *New Renaissance* (Autumn 1996) titled "Holistic education". Essays by Ivana Milojević on women and holistic education, Marcus Bussey on redefining education, and myself on multiculturalism and education are foundational pieces for this book. We would like to thank the editor, Dada Vedaprajinananda for leadership in providing a forum for helping us and others develop the theory and practice of neohumanism. *New Renaissance* remains a social and spiritual incubator for social innovation (www.ru.org).

More recent links can be traced to the *Journal of Futures Studies* (http://www2.tku.edu.tw/~tddx/jfs/). The links between critical theory and spirituality, between globalisation and alternative visions of education, and between pedagogy and futures studies have been developed there. Ivana Milojević (critical spirituality and education) and Marcus Anthony (integrated intelligence and education) contributed to Vol. 9, No. 3, 2005; Helene Pederson (on schools and speciecism) contributed to Vol. 8, No. 4, 2004; Marcus Bussey (critical spirituality and neohumanism) contributed to Vol. 5, No. 2, 2000; and myself (Teaching Futures Studies: From strategy to transformative change) in Vol. 7, No. 3, 2003. We would like to thank the *Journal of Futures Studies* for moving the discourse from education about the future to education about alternative futures, specifically toward neohumanist futures.

Instrumental in moving this book from an idea to reality was a seminar held at the end of August, 2003, in Dubrovnik called New Wave: Vision of Youth (http://www.gurukul.edu/news_00009.php). Motivated by the enthusiasm and idealism of youth from that region, Didi Ananda Rama inspired all of us to work in writing a book on neohumanist education.

My personal commitment to neohumanism and neohumanistic education goes back decades. For me, the neohumanistic challenge is about opening up identity from the exclusivist dimension of territory and community to far more inclusionary planetary articulations. This means challenging those attitudes, selves that 'other' others—that are racist, sexist, nationalistic in practice. Having grown up in a number of places—Lahore and Peshawar, Pakistan; Bloomington and New York, USA; Geneva, Switzerland; Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; Honolulu, Hawaii; and now living in Mooloolaba, Australia—I've seen how I have been othered—put down, bullied, made to feel less—and how I too have used the weapons of nation, religion, gender on others. Even in spiritual practice, as we attempt to move toward universal humanism, we, I, have disowned selves that are far less inspiring. Recognizing these disowned selves is crucial in developing a neohumanist self. Without this new self, our educational content, process and structure will tend to remain tied to historical exclusionary identities.

The chapters in front of you are attempts to move out of these identities, to create new futures, particularly exploring the implications of neohumanism for pedagogy.

There is no end game to neohumanism—it is not as if we are suddenly enlightened and become neohumanist. Even the enlightened being must speak, and when she or he does so, language is used. Language is central to the challenge of pedagogy. Language is not transparent, but opaque. Our worldviews—of transcendence but also of trauma and dogma—are complicit in language. Thus, neohumanist educational futures: it is a vision, an ideal, a possibility of a different type of education. Realizing this vision, however, does not only come from theorizing, but from creating schools that practice neohumanism, so that the theory is interactively informed by day—to—day learnings. In between the theory and the practice is the person. Neohumanism is about transforming that person, expanding our selves and our societies, embracing the earth, and indeed the universe. Doing so requires liberating not just educational processes, content and structures but the self, the intellect, we use to envision these possibilities.

Marcus Bussey

As Sohail Inayatullah has acknowledged the sources and inspiration for this book, I would like to offer three credits of a different nature. The first is to Prabhat Rainjan Sarkar (1921-1990) who first developed the idea of neohumanism articulated in this text. His first discourses on neohumanism as a general reframing of the social were given in 1982 and he noted its particular relevance to education. A number of educators at the time made the first steps toward applying his ideas in the context of early childhood pedagogy. Didis Ananda Mitra and Ananda Nivedita developed a curriculum that appeared as *The Circle of Love*. This book and its underlying ordering of the curriculum into stages that correspond to the yogic concept of the *Brahma Chakra*—the evolutionary cycle of creation—remains an invaluable resource today. Since then numerous texts have appeared to enrich our educational thinking, culminating in two significant books, a collection of essays on neohumanist education by Sarkar¹ and Didi Ananda Rama's wonderful and visually sumptuous collection of neohumanist reflections.²

The beauty of all the thinking on neohumanist education to date is its openness to the cultural contexts in which it finds itself. This openness is premised on the recognition that to write a classroom method would kill the creative and transformative spirit of neohumanism. Why? Texts have a tendency to become dogma, and any classroom method would prematurely define what is right, possible and relevant. Such definition would soon become both historically and culturally bound.

Method without deep intention/reflective/deconstructive processes will inevitably become a victim of its own best intentions—violence to self and other will always result. Sarkar wisely left no neohumanist education method. His was a cultural project in which he valued open systems over closed. He recognised that the uniqueness of the human condition—its existential condition—meant that replicability of a pedagogical process through legislating curriculum and mandating behavioural, structural and affective processes would destroy the real meaning of neohumanist education.

Intention—as—method should always unleash the creative energies of those involved and should also affirm agency. Intention—as—method means deep praxis. The core of the neohumanist method exists not in the classroom but in the human heart. Principles for benevolent action are built into it at all levels of the human condition: the physical, intellectual, and spiritual. This is what we must work with.

The second credit is to the tireless work of Arati Brim. Her part in my story is significant though we have only met face to face on one brief occasion. I have been teaching in neohumanist schools and/or contexts since 1988 and it has been a growing and deepening experience for me. I went to the first global neohumanist conference held in India in 1992, and it was then that I

was first inspired to edit a text like this. Then, in 1995 I decided to do a Masters in education focussing on neohumanist education.

Filled with confidence I went to a university, found an open minded supervisor and started work. Early on she turned to me and asked me to define neohumanist education for her. I was struck dumb. I could not find any appropriate way to communicate what I thought and felt. With my tail between my legs I went away. I dropped out of the course and thought long and hard. At this time I read everything I could find, meditated and kept teaching. Then in 1998 I received an email from Arati asking me to help write up pages for the new neohumanist education web site—http://gurukul.edu/. Suddenly the words started to flow. Thank you Arati!

Arati has also worked closely with Didi Ananda Rama in designing the first comprehensive diploma in neohumanist early childhood education. In addition, she has pretty much single–handedly produced the *Gurukul Newsletter* for the past ten years. Her quiet role in the venture cannot be under estimated.

My third credit is a thank you to my parents Marjorie and Victor Bussey. The creative world of ideas that is the hallmark of my parents' love of living and learning can certainly be seen to have shaped my own concerns and career. Of further note is the detail of my mother's painting *Kundalini* on the front of this book. I am convinced that my interest in education and sensitivity to creative processes as a way of engaging in transformative education owe much to her own vital engagement with art and education.

This book in many ways is a journey to the heart of learning. There is no attempt here to define a method for the classroom or school. The chapters are exploratory and open. Learning, as I have pointed out, is not something that can be codified. It is not curriculum, though this has something to do with education. Nor is it about information or even wisdom, though these too are aspects of learning. Learning, or specifically neohumanist learning, is an attitude, a stance that cannot be easily expressed and certainly cannot be prescribed. The teacher comes to embody the process; hence it is always alive and responsive to context. Neohumanist education is something you come to feel as much as think.

The paradox of futures work is that it has much less to do with the future than the present and the past. Neohumanist futures involves working in the present towards desired outcomes that foster increased levels of

-

^{*} *Kundalini* is the coiled serpent that is the source of creative energy and the vital spiritual power within our own being.

meaning, wellbeing and purpose around the world. In this process we acknowledge our indebtedness to the past in the form of the rich and diverse cultural traditions we inherit today.

Simultaneously, we must acknowledge the debt we owe to those in the past whose lives and cultures have suffered because of the actions of our predecessors. This double debt carries on into the present where affluence in one part of the world is linked to poverty in another. Similarly, this debt is projected into the future, as affluence today is in many ways built on diminished returns in the future for future generations who will not only inherit the best of what we do today but also the foreseen and unforeseen results of current economic, social and environmental activity.

So, when we come to map neohumanist educational futures we must unpack the traditions that inform the neohumanist educational potentiality while acknowledging the deeply ethical commitment it has to a fulfilment of our debt to the hidden temporal economics described above. Indebtedness, which brings gratitude not guilt, is a necessary condition for a deepened sense of connection and responsibility towards all generations, past, present and future, as well as to the cultures and environments (both human and natural) that have, do or will sustain them.

It is hard for modern Western consciousness, permeated by a belief in individuality and personal agency and autonomy, to feel comfortable with this concept of indebtedness: the owing of an impersonal debt. Yet this awareness has many useful ethical dimensions. Firstly, it humbles those who feel 'above' or 'outside' of the social, historical and environmental contexts of their humanity. Secondly, it also underscores the relationship with past, present and future, bringing with it a sense of responsibility and the need for ethical and sustainable action at all times. Thirdly, it carries with it a spiritual imperative linked to a sense of belonging to a 'story' or 'body' of humanity by virtue of blood spilt, tears shed, and hope unfulfilled; this is what might be called belonging by virtue of the debt that cannot be repaid.

Ivana Milojević

I owe a personal debt to the people and experiences that helped make me who I am today. What follows is my story. This story contextualises my attraction to the neohumanist stretching of boundaries and challenging of

tightly held yet socially constructed identities. Similarly to personal histories offered by Sohail Inayatullah and Marcus Bussey, my personal commitment to neohumanist education also goes to childhood. Furthermore, both my personal and professional engagements with core neohumanist ideas have not been an easy process but have gone through many trials and tribulations. This has been a process of both trauma and transcendence, in regard to my own identity, educational and knowledge processes that I have been part of, and indeed, in regard to my own views of life itself. One common thread in this process has certainly been the questions of who and why I am and where I may be going. Another common thread is my desire to go toward ever—expanding vistas, well beyond the confines of imposed, stifling answers and confining identity structures. In this process, some events held greater significance than others.

My first memory of a confining identity was when a group of boys didn't let me join their game as I was 'a girl'. They were moving miniature cars by hand, over improvised tunnels, bridges and roads—a task apparently beyond my capabilities and those of my gender. As a girl and a woman, I have experienced various forms of exclusion, semi-inclusion and subtle and not so subtle dwindling of my humanity all my life.

Throughout my childhood, through both formal and informal education practices, I received two messages that often collided-that I was a 'human' and that I was a 'girl/woman'. As a human, I had the opportunity to fully participate in a human society, however, as a girl/woman I had the obligation to know/accept my limitations as a member of a particular 'sub'/inferior social group. I was often confused as to what to expect from myself. For example, I could see that my academic 'achievement' in primary and secondary school was 'superior' to that of all the boys that attended the same classes as I did. Unlike me, no boy was a straight 'A' student there and then. At the same time, I could also see that all the 'important' people in human history that somehow 'excelled' in the area of academic achievement—i.e. theorists, philosophers, academics, scientists were not of my gender. The 'best' explanation for this phenomenon given to me related to men's superior physical size/strength, ability to go into the army, late but also extraordinary development in their late teens, and the peculiar influence of male hormones and brain size.

Needless to say, I was relieved, enthused and inspired by discovering feminist theory. This increasing knowledge of feminist theory, concepts, research and methods has been slowly, over the years and decades, chipping away at the damage done in my early childhood. Thus my first chosen identity was that of 'a feminist'—an identity that was initially giving me some freedom to cross over one particular boundary/border.

We all carry many traumas within our psyche. Two major ones for me that continued chipping away any certainty I may have had in regard to the social construction of identity-were the wars in the former Yugoslavia and my migration to Australia. In various ways, these two qualitatively different types of event took away my national, ethnic, and professional identity based on a particular social strata. Upon my arrival in Australia, I also 'managed' to change my racial identity—from considering myself as 'white' to being considered by others as 'olive'. A peculiar racial identity indeed (!), but certainly based on particular histories of migration and various 'otherings' operating within the Australian context. The complexity of the ethnic/racial/cultural mix of my current family is yet another reason in a series of personal events that have led to neohumanism making sense to me. Beyond various geo- and sociosentiments, there lay the possibility for a unified humanity, a vision of our identities as they truly, ultimately are. The latest scientific (i.e. human genome mapping), anthropological (i.e. where we all originally come from) and psychological research (i.e. what we need to do to be mentally healthy and happy) requires a vision and functioning cosmology that can further facilitate the development of a 'conscious' evolution of/for a global/planetary human society. To me, the not so wonderful alternatives to planetary based cosmologies and philosophies such as neohumanism will only result in further divisions among humans, environmental degradation, as well as a further increase in social anomia and various forms of violence.

But the beauty of neohumanism is that the liberating possibilities do not stop here, with consideration only given to the sentient beings we identify as human. Rather, neohumanism enables us to position ourselves within a broader context of ever evolving life on Earth, and possibly beyond. This planetary vision transcends various limitations posed by individualism, nationalism, industrialism, competitive globalism, as well as classism, castism, racism, and patriarchy. As such, it is based on the new emerging ecological paradigm rather than the anthropocentric philosophy of the Enlightenment. However, if this new paradigm is not realized, the impairment to human spirit and psyche, through various boundaries of socially constructed identities, cannot be overstated. Many decades ago Sigmund Freud discovered and described the damage done when

narcissistic injury—the infatuation with one's self—becomes a narcissistic rage, wherein the individual associates with a larger group such as an ethnic group or nation—state and perceives injuries to the group as an injury to the self. When such events do occur, this narcissistic rage can only be reduced by the violent 'undoing' of hurt, through forms of both illegal and legalised violence, "just war" being an example of the latter. Subsequently, the cycles of the 'initial attack' and 'subsequent revenge' perpetually continue.

Neohumanism, on the other hand, challenges these historical and contemporary developments in regard to global war, violence and social injustice in a simple yet profound way by asking the following question: What happens when the human desire for limitlessness—for identifying with something larger than the self—goes all the way, beyond limitations of ethnicity, class, race, religion, gender, nation—state, and even species? To me, the answer is again both simple and profound: There are no enemies to fight, no boundaries to thwart our spirit, no socially constructed identity based on a gripping fear of being lost, and no attachments worth human suffering.

Among many challenges neohumanism throws at contemporary dominant ways of being, thinking and doing is in relation to how we treat and what we teach our children. It is painfully obvious to me that if we continue to model and teach-in both covert and overt terms-various forms of 'othering' and limiting identities, the contemporary processes of domination, 'power over', unrelenting competition and endemic violence will continue. And so will human misery and hopelessness. It has been said many times before that our current dominant educational processes, structures and contents—which are too often in line with and directly feeding into various individual and social dysfunctions-need to be fundamentally challenged. Countless educators, parents and community members have been working relentlessly to help us both further theorise as well as put into practice alternatives that are inspiring, transformative and doable. Some of those individuals, and their influence on this book, have been mentioned earlier in this foreword. Countless others, many of whom we have not had personal contact with, are also helping the transformative praxis of planetary neohumanistic education continue, whether they are using these particular terms or not. My sincere thanks go to all who are part of this process in general, and to the writers and readers of this text in particular. Education may not help save the (human) world, but an education of a particular kind just might. At the very least, it may

help with	one's own	spiritual	yearning,	personal	transformation	and	the
walk back	home.						

Introducing Neohumanism

While the roots of neohumanism are certainly based on the spiritual practice of Tantra (from the broader Indic episteme), neohumanism and neohumanistic education is situated best as a transcivilizational global pedagogy.

Neohumanism has both a linear dimension, continuing the progressive evolution of rights that the Enlightenment has given us, and a cyclical dimension, embracing our ancient spiritual traditions, creating thus a turn of the spiral, transcending and including past and present.

Neohumanism thus aims to relocate the self from ego (and the pursuit of individual maximisation), from family (and the pride of genealogy), from geo-sentiments (attachments to land and nation), from socio-sentiments (attachments to class, race and religious community), from humanism (the human being as the centre of the universe) to neohumanism (love and devotion for all, inanimate and animate, beings of the universe).

The chapters

The book itself is divided into five parts.

Chapters by Marcus Bussey, Acharya Vedaprajiananda, Ivana Milojević and Sohail Inayatullah theorize neohumanist education. In these chapters, educational process is set within the context of globalisation and the theoretical domains of critical theory and social futures.

The second part is focused on the spiritual in education. Chapters by Tobin Hart and Marcus Anthony explore the genealogical and epistemic traditions that have defined the spiritual in education and with which neohumanist theory dialogues. A further chapter by Ivana Milojević offers insights into how neohumanism is situated in the discourse of collective violence pedagogy, with specific reference to the relationship of transformative educational practice to both 'hard' and 'soft' versions of religion and constructions of the spiritual.

The third section of the book focuses on particular issues in educational futures. Included are chapters on partnership education by Riane Eisler, social cohesion by Marlene de Beer, speciesism by Helene Pederson, indicators of alternative education by Vachel Miller, the teaching of neohumanist history by Marcus Bussey and Sohail Inayatullah, and finally

Peter Hayward and Joseph Voros' role-playing game that provides an experiential sense of the implications of neohumanism for leadership.

Part Four presents two examples of neohumanist education in practice, with a case study by Ivana Milojević of a neohumanistic school and Mahajyoti Glassman's thoughts on how to teach neohumanism.

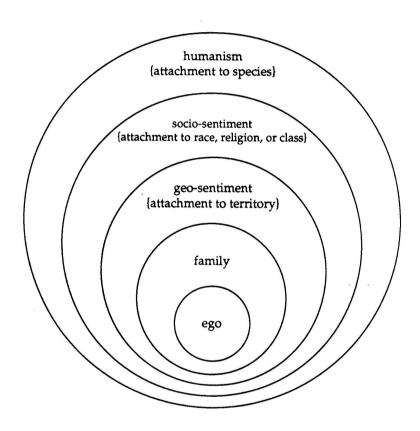
The book concludes on a futures note with an exploration of neohumanist educational scenarios by Sohail Inayatullah.

Interspersed in these parts are short Perspectives by Prabhat Rainjan Sarkar, Acharya Shambushivananda, and Acharya Maheshvarananda (interviewing Paulo Freire) and the book concludes with a short set of appendices.

We hope that this book will engage the intellect; however, our intention is that this process of engagement leads to its liberation. As Sarkar wrote many years ago: "Sa' vidya' ya' vimuktaye" or "Education is that which liberates". Thank you for joining us on this journey.

neo-humanism

{love and respect for all beings, animate and inanimate, in the universe}



Sarkar's neohumanism: the liberation of the intellect

Conclusion The Futures of Neohumanist Education

Sohail Inayatullah

Is neohumanist education a plausible future? This chapter explores this question, asking why we are optimistic, why do we believe a new educational philosophy is possible?

The weights are certainly stacked against an alternative future that challenges the *status quo* of student preparation for global competitive capitalism (or national economic development). Indeed, that education can successfully prepare students for any future other than the conservatism and standardization of the feudal and industrial templates remains a question.

Education, as Foucault and many others have argued,ⁱⁱⁱ while claiming to prepare for the future is essentially about social control, creating disciplined bodies and ordered minds to reinforce the present. And even where there is change in other parts of society, education lags behind. It does so because, among other reasons, schools, in many nations, are citizen controlled. Citizens seek to replicate their learning experiences (it was good enough for them). And even where Ministries of Education define curricula, they are still responsible to parents, who seek to influence the educational. While citizens are willing to forgo their evaluative power to experts in the areas of health, economic policy, and defense, in education, each person is an expert. Education thus has multiple stakeholders attempting to influence its content, process and structure—parents, principals, teachers, Ministries, the press and students. As Milojević argues, summarizing Cuban, schools "are multipurpose, many-layered, labor intensive, relationship-dependent and profoundly conservative". iv

The context for education, currently—the Global situation—does not look promising either—environmental catastrophes (mass species extinction; global warming with a possible Ice Age to come; massive pollution and congestion in large global, particularly, Asian cities); instability in international relations, with the relative decline of one hegemony—the USA—and the rise of another—China—with all the ensuing tensions and deep conflicts this is likely to create; a move to the political Right throughout the world, with the 'other' increasingly being the object of fear (the politics of the gaze

where those who look different are blamed for social ills); and politics moving toward border and boundary protectionism—with the nation–state as fortress.

At a macro level, I see four types of protectionism in opposition to the openness and expansion that neohumanism seeks. In the North and South—there is economic protectionism, the fear of the rise of India and China and thus loss of jobs; social protectionism, the fear of the migrant; spiritual protectionism, the Left's fear of a post-secular world; and religious protectionism—fear of other religions and the assumption that one's own is the best.

Neohumanism, in contrast, seeks to break out of current borders and boundaries creating a softer self and an ethics of love and devotion for all the inanimate and animate beings of the universe. It seeks to protect only the tender dimension of what it means to be human, to help create a gentler society, in the words of Elise Boulding and Ivana Milojević.^v

Certainly a tall² order in a world where hyper-masculinity has become more of the norm

Even futures thinking in general, without neohumanist thought, has yet to take off in educational settings. vi The reasons are varied but they include:

- 1. Educators (in common with other fields) have strong disciplinary boundaries and resist information that they did not help create. Why then would they accept anything as personally challenging as neohumanism (challenging religion, secularism, humanism in favor of spirituality and universalism)?
- 2. The future is discounted, and educators are overwhelmed. They seek how-to workbooks not dramatic changes in ethos. And those who do change ethos still have to negotiate the treacheries of governmental bureaucracies and university hierarchies.
- 3. Education infrastructure, both physically and in terms of imagined/envisioned development, is still from the nineteenth century. That is, classes are still designed with the image of teacher as a fountain of information and student as empty glass or as clay to be molded by authority. Mutual co-evolutionary learning, as in neohumanism, is considered too difficult to achieve as it requires inner reflection and expanded responsibility by all learners (students, teachers, administrators and parents).
- 4. The digital era may have begun, but our organizing principles are still from the industrial era; which, while a few hundred years old, still remain dominant. Thus, even with digital technologies the structure of the classroom —desks all in a line—remains intact. If the digital revolution is considered challenging, how will neohumanism find a home (as it is Gaia spirit tech—sustainability, spirituality plus digitalization)?

But let us take some words of inspiration from Fred Polakvii

² The language of size betrays us here.

Many utopian themes, arising in fantasy, find their way to reality. Scientific management, full employment, and social security were all once figments of a utopia-writers' imagination. So were parliamentary democracy, universal suffrage, planning, and the trade union movement. The tremendous concern for child-rearing and universal education, for eugenics, and for garden cities all emanated from the utopia. The utopia stood for the emancipation of women long before the existence of the feminist movement. All the current concepts concerning labor, from the length of the work week to profit-sharing, are found in the utopia. Thanks to the utopianists, the twentieth century did not catch man totally unprepared.

Yes, the structure of resistance to change is deep but alternative images beckon.

As Oliver Markleyviii argued many decades ago, we are in the middle of an historical shift where the image of the future leads. The image—at least one image—is more and more about sustainability instead of industrial expansionism; global governance instead of the nation—state; gender partnership instead of male domination; respect for and the rights of nature instead of man over nature; spirituality instead of religion; communication and understanding as central to solving problems instead of the search for the techno-fix; and technology as embedded in nature and evolution instead of as a neutral tool. However, our reality remains feudal and industrial—it is this tension between the aspirational (the future we can almost see) and the unnecessary brutality of what we have that creates our current anxieties and despair.

And yet, if we wish for a different future, another vision of education is pivotal. Writes Giroux: ix

Radical pedagogy needs to be informed by a passionate faith in the necessity of struggling to create a better world. In other words, radical pedagogy needs a vision—one that celebrates not what is but what could be, that looks beyond the immediate to the future and links struggle to a new human possibilities. This is a call for a concrete utopianism.

Thus, while history weighs us down and globalisation, digitalization, geneticization, global demographic shifts push us into the unknown, alternative images of the future fight for our attention. Will global digitalization qua capitalism succeed? Will the current nation–state system, with education for national development and skills to compete, continue its dominance? Will we revert back to the religious protectionism of the Caliphate or the Church, or will neohumanism or other similarly different futures based on spirituality and sustainability transform the world?

These are broad issues. To return to the opening question of "is neohumanism plausible?", in the next part of this essay, I will take one particular issue—the neohumanist focus on nature, and its rights.

Nature and its rights

Among the key tenets of neohumanism is a world where nature has rights—it is not seen as other but an integral part of who we are. How the weakest are treated is an indicator of the success of neohumanism. Will nature have rights? In what ways? This is

not to argue that nature will or should be alive exactly the way humans are (although one can make that case) but that rights are epistemic and political—rights are hard fought discursive battles (as are futures).

As Christopher Stone has argued: "throughout legal history, each successive extension of rights to some new entity has been theretofore, a bit unthinkable. We are inclined to suppose the rightlessness of rightless 'things' to be a decree of Nature, not a legal convention acting in support of the status quo". *

Our history of rights can be seen as a battle between inclusion and exclusion—between I-thou relationships and I-it relationships. The forces of exclusion have not been the same, they have changed through history—sometimes they have been centralized empires, other times centralized religious systems, and other times nation—states operating in a world-capitalist system. They have also been elders, siblings, bosses and all the other petty tyrants we must negotiate with day after day. And they have been these external forces internalized in us—the tyrant within.xi

We have consistently defined others as less than ourselves: once done so, then every possible heinous crime can be committed against them. Globalism (as an economic image) is the latest victory in defining others as somehow less—'become more efficient, more productive, export more, be all that you can be' is the narrative. You are fundamentally a producer and consumer, and unless you do the former competitively, your ability to engage in the latter will be restricted. Globalism in its economic definition merely continues the language of colonialism and developmentalism—the same sense of inevitability is there, the same recourse to the grand masters of social evolution—Comte and Darwin—is there. Many responses to globalism follow the same simplistic pattern, well seeing it as a conspiracy of the powerful, of the West, of capital, instead of understanding the deeper and more complex patterns of history.

The basic presumption of globalism is one of hierarchy, framed neutrally as comparative advantage but in fact a social-genetic-cultural model of who is civilized and who is barbaric. Education in this model is essentially about skilling individuals to compete harder and faster so they can be at the top of the chain (and thus write off other 'races' as naturally uncivilized). Notions hinging on the ability of education to cultivate the mind, to develop alternative futures, and to instil a mission to change the world are the casualities of this type of globalisation.

But we can take a different tack? What if we seriously took, for example, the Tantric Indian and Buddhist civilizational worldview wherein all of life, including technology, is alive? Or the American Indian, as developed by Jamake Highwater, xiii who reminds us

actively prosecute opinions/ideologies that are trying to resist the above process (1-4). (6) When confront with your own deeds, you deny them or justify them with "Others are also doing it", or "It's a war".

³ Milojević has the following stages: (1) You create the category of 'the other' (even if that other was until recently part of 'us'). (2) You attach to 'the other' the attribute of 'the less'. (3) You create the sense of threat, 'them' coming after 'us'. (4) You glorify heroic fighting and sacrifice for ones own people/land. (5) You actively prosecute opinions/ideologies that are trying to resist the above process (1-4). (6) When confronted

that it is the collective that is alive, existing in a relationship of sharing, caring and gratitude, not dominance, or James Lovelock's theory of Earth as a living system.xiv All these, as Eislerxv has argued, focus on partnership education.

Again, this alternative reading of globalisation does not necessarily mean a totally horizontal world where all have equal rights, as in the Western perspective or a collectivized "Father knows best" vertical world. Rather it means a world where there are layers of reality, where mind is in all things from humans to animals to plants and, even, dare we say, to technology (robots, for example).

Education in the world would be focused on the whole person—body, mind, and spirit—and on capacity: the confidence, to create alternative and desired futures within an ethical framework.

This would mean a world with some rights for animals (and even plants⁴ as well)—a vegetarian world; one cannot love the collective if one eats the individual, the tantrica might tell us. By vegetarian, we are not only situating the personal in the political, but reminding us that behind our collective food habits is an anti-ecology regime, an anti-life regime, an anti-health regime, that is, our eco-system is at stake,^{xvi} our health would all be better if we saw animals as being not part of the Darwinian chain of life, the circle of life, but as part of an ecology of consciousness.

But, you will say, this is an ethnocentric argument. We are meat-eaters. Evolution calls us to slay the weak.

Yes, rights then are ethnocentric and more often than not human-centric. The extension of rights—in this case to animals—has always been unthinkable, the impossible, and yet we have not had any level of human progress without the extension of rights to those we previously considered not-worthy. Evolution can be seen as a survival of the fittest or as enhancing our capacity for compassion.

In an essay titled, "Visioning a Peaceful World", Johan Galtung writes: "Abolition of war is similar to what the people fighting against slavery and colonialism, abject exploitation and patriarchy were and are up against. They won, or are winning. We live in their utopia, which then proved to be a realistic utopia. So is ours: a concrete utopia for peace".xvii

The context for this is a new science as well—not losing the openness of its methodology—but being critically self-reflective, exploring its assumptions, including that of openness. As well, an alternative science would have an inner dimension as well, bringing in spiritual dimensions, at least as context, if not as evidence.xviii Darwin too, as in the work of David Loye, would need to be rethought, focusing less on competition and survival of the fittest and more on love as central to evolution.xix Asks Loye, why is Darwin associated with survival of the fittest when he wrote far more about love and moral sensibilities. "Could it be that Darwin had actually written that it was *caring for*

⁴ Should we then not eat plants becomes a key question—certainly there is some evidence that plants feel 'pain' but this would be qualitatively different from what humans or animals feel. Where one draws the border is crucial and as we 'evolve' it will keep changing.

others, moral sensitivity and cooperation (for they used "mutuality" in place of the word "cooperation" back then) that mainly drives ahead human evolution?".xx While the scientific evidence for the image of the future as pulling us forward remains fleeting, for social evolution, the image of the future is pivotal. The world we imagine, we desire, plays a part in the world we create.xxi

This gives us grounds for cautious optimism—the past has been bleak but a new dimension of globalisation is our capacity to collectively reflect on who we are, and make wiser decisions as to where we desire to go. Indeed, biologist Elisabeth Sahtouris argues that global warming can become a global peace process, as the challenge is worldwide and it is only through cooperative scientific, social and educational cooperation that the challenge can be met.*

Inclusion and rights

As much as history has been about the exclusion of rights; it has also been about the advancement of rights. Glossing human history, I argue that even while there are certainly cyclical dimensions to history (the rise and fall, the strengthening and weakening, the back and forth of class, civilization, *varna*, nation), there are downward stages (war, the planet under environmental threat), and there is also a linear movement toward more rights, towards laying bare power.

Globally, and particularly in the European context, there has been a succession of revolutions, each one granting increased rights to a group that had been exploited by the dominant social class and limiting the powers of those at the top.

- (1) The revolt of the peasants against feudalism (the late middle ages, the fourteenth century)—increased rights for peasants.
- (2) The revolt of aristocrats against clergy (church/state)—wherein church power was contested (modernity)—the breakdown of Church dogma and the development of scientific thinking.
- (3) The revolt of aristocrats against the king, a constitutional revolution as in the English Glorious Revolution of the seventeenth century, a process started much earlier with the Magna Carta in the thirteenth century.
- (3) The revolt of bourgeois against the aristocrats and clergy. This was the French revolution and gave political expression to the ideals of the Enlightenment which saw the victory for rational humanism and science against ideational church dogma.
- (4) The revolt of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie. This was the Russian socialist revolution of 1917 which led to, at least in the short run, increased rights for labour. In Nordic nations this was more of a gradual evolution of labour coming and staying in power and eventually creating the welfare state.
- (5) Elsewhere, there was the revolt of the peasants against the city. This was Máo Zédōng's formula (the argument that the two opposing camps are the city and the rural). Pol Pot took this view to its tragic consequence. The city, however, appears to be

winning although telecommunications might allow a return to the village, but at this stage it is more the Los Angelisation of the planet than the creation of a global village.

- (6) More recently (and of course, part of a long term trend) has been the revolt of women against men, against patriarchy in all its forms. This is the pivotal trend of increased rights for women.
- (7) The revolt of the Third World against Europe, and centralized Western institutions. This is the decolonization process, we can consider the eighteenth century American Revolution as a much earlier example of this.
- (8) The revolt of nature against industrialism. This has been the Green position calling for the limits of technocracy and the creation of a culture of deep sustainability.
- (9) The revolt of the indigenous against all foreign social formations, calling for the creation of a special status for them as guardians of the planet.
- (10) In the last thirty years there has also been a revolt against the worldview of the nation–state and international capital, wherein social movements are aligning themselves to create a third space that is beholden neither to the prince nor merchant, neither to the inter-state system nor to global capitalism.xiii

Define or be defined

These revolutions—especially the latter ones—have not only been about increased rights but also about defining the rights discourse, deciding what constitutes a right, who defines it, and how rights are to be protected and implemented. This is one of the crucial battles of the near term future, to define or be defined by others.

While the general trend at one level is progressive—more happiness for more people—at another level there are exaggerations of systems. One example is the victory of the Enlightenment over religious systems and traditional society which has led to a pendulum shift back to traditional tribal systems—localisms, violent ethnicity and in many ways a pre-scientific world. This tension between the modern and tribal cannot, I would argue, be resolved by staying still or going backward but through the creation of a post-rational and post-scientific world that integrates the sensate and the ideational.

Certainly then, the advancement of rights, while progressive, does not go far enough. They need to be expanded.

- 1. First, following Sarkar, xxiv we need to expand humanism to neohumanism, which struggles against the Enlightenment's anthropocentrism and argues for increased rights for plants and animals –moving us towards towards global vegetarianism and a global ecological regime.
- 2. Following, numerous third world activists and federalists, what is needed is to expand the concept of the Magna Carta (against the power of the king) into a neomagna carta and develop a world government with basic human rights; rights of language, right of religion and right to purchasing power (related to this is maximini wage structure wherein minimum economic rights are guaranteed).

3. A spiritual revolution against materialism and secularism, creating the possibility of not just intellectual reflection on life but reflection on the "self" of the intellect—challenging the authority of the modern and traditional ego. This is self as conscious presence beyond the self as thinker. **xxv*

The emergence of a neohumanist future, the expansion of rights, however, will not come about through polite conferences, but as we know, through epistemic (the language/worldview battle), cultural (through a renaissance in art, music, and thought) social (the organizations of values and institutions), political (challenging state power) struggle and inner presence (bringing awareness and consciousness to our false projections). At the centre of these sites of change is education.

The process of rights

What is the possibility that neohumanism will succeed? To understand this possibility, we borrow from the work of Neal Milner. He suggests the following social process of understanding how rights are obtained.xxvi

His first stage in this theory is imagery. Here imagery stressing rationality of the potential rights-holder is necessary. This has been part of the struggle for rights of nature, since nature is not considered a rational actor. Within the neohumanist educational framework, it is the teaching and learning of vegetarianism, for one. As well, it is the learning of deep ecology—nature as part of who "we" are thus extending the definition of rationality and linking it to the other. Third, it is the spreading of the meme 5xxvii of "one human family" instead of the meme of nation or empire, as they are both governed by the discourse of the brutal tribal battle of survival.

The next stage of rights emergence requires a justifying ideology. Over time, ideologies that justify the changes in imagery develop. These, according to Milner, include ideologies by agents of social control and those on the part of potential rights holders or their representatives. This book is certainly part of the process of creating a new worldview—spiritual centred; education for liberation; education to promote human ethics (including non-killing); education from within, to cultivate inner peace, for body, mind and spirit; and linking the purpose of life with the propose of education.xxviii

The next stage is one of changing authority patterns. In this phase, authority patterns of the institutions governing the emerging rights holders begin to change. This stage has yet to occur in neohumanist education and is still emergent for the rights of nature.

Milner next sees the development of "social networks that reinforce the new ideology and that form ties among potential clients, attorneys and intermediaries".xxix While there are many groups focused on spiritual education, sustainability, the rights of nature and vegetarianism, they are not linked yet as social and political networks (a global political party, for example).

11

⁵ http://www.scholars.nus.edu.sg/ cpace/infotech/cook/memedef.html. Meme refers to ideas that self-replicate, as with genes. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines meme as: An element of a culture that may be considered to be passed on by non-genetic means, esp. imitation".

The next stage involves access to legal representation. This is followed by routinization, wherein legal representation is made routinely available. Finally, government uses its processes to represent the emerging rights-holders.

Neohumanist education is at the mid-way phase. The image has emerged; currently it is at the stage of justifying ideology (this book is certainly part of this phase) and next is changing authority patterns, that is, Ministries of Education and school boards adopting the neohumanist vision. Routinization is still far away, and as we will see in the next section, routinization is not the only scenario or pathway.

Framing the debate as only an issue of rights qua legal expressions is limiting; rights are nested in civilizational views of space, time and other. Moreover, while for some, a civilizations rights become real when governmentalized, in other maps, rights are part of a web of relationships between self, community and the larger collective, the state, this is especially so in collectivist societies. Rights are related to ones responsibilities, to one's *dharma*.

The main point in this narrative is to note that movements have patterns—certain stages they go through.

Another way to approach this is via Richard Slaughter's t-cycle.*** This cycle has the following stages.

Stage 1: the dominant paradigm is supreme—the tensions have not yet appeared.

Stage 2: there is a breakdown of meanings, tensions appear, as the dominant paradigm which worked in one phase in history no longer meets the changing needs of the population—it has not adapted, it is unable to express the emerging alternative realities.

Stage 3: a new paradigm emerges, challenging the old. This future seeks to meet the new needs.

Stage 4: the old paradigm disappears and the new one is victorious, or far more likely, meanings are negotiated, and there is some compromise—the new paradigm includes the old, or the old paradigm appropriates features of the new (for example, teaching sustainability and nature issues in school but not the full movement to neohumanism).

Neohumanism can be seen as one of the options that is emerging as there is a breakdown in meanings with the old paradigm. Merely tinkering on the edges does not suffice—the rapid industrial rise of China and then India will only exacerbate global warming, not reduce it. Global wealth creation, while important in reducing poverty in certain parts of the world, is simultaneously dramatically increasing world wealth disparity.⁶

_

⁶ The UN reports these figures. **1960:** The poorest 20% of the world's population only had a share of 2.3% of the global income. The top 20% of the world's population earned 70.2% of the global income. **1998:** The poorest 20% of the world's population only had a share of 1.2% of the global income. The top 20% of the world's population earned 89% of the global income. http://poorcity.richcity.org/entundp.htm. See the UNDP Human development reports. http://stone.undp.org/hdr/reports/view_reports.cfm?type=1

I have attempted in this chapter to present some of the causes of optimism—largely that the present crisis cannot be solved within the current worldview—that a dramatic change in worldview is needed. Education is crucial to this change. However, it is often conservative and complex—changing its framework, even when the need is dire, is far from easy.

We have so far used the rights discourse to explicate neohumanist education; we now switch to the futures discourse.

What then are the futures of neohumanism?

Profound change

The first and most hopeful one is the basis of this book—a profound paradigm change leads to neohumanism becoming the norm. Neohumanist education would thus become desired—the yardstick by which other educational systems are measured.

One could see the visible signs of neohumanism at schools—instead of a national flag there may be a Gaian flag or a flag would not even need to be at the school entrance—as education would not be about identities that could be so easily captured.

At the systemic level, the school would be electronically linked to other schools; however, the technology would be invisible. There would not be a separate computer room rather communications technology would be invisible. Perhaps there would be webcams in the eco-gardens helping monitor the organic vegetables. Technology would not be defining—communication within, between girls and boys, between students and teachers and between students and others around the world would be far more important. Calm dynamism might be a term to describe the school.

The dominant worldview would be spiritual—not ascetic or religious but an understanding that each person had a unique relationship with a deeper dimension of themselves or the transcendent. There may be morning meditations or prayers or perhaps just silent time for reflection. Yoga, tai-chi, martial arts would likely be part of the school as well. As would sports—sports may be traditional but generally they would be far less competitive, games designed that produced individual and collective partnership and excellence. The body, mind and spirit of each person would be the focus.

The underlying myth of the school would be a garden of many individual cultures—with teachers part of the garden, their practices perhaps analogous to nutrients, perhaps to water ...

Parents too would be part of this garden. The school would be a reflection of society, not isolated from it. The world economy would be far more cooperative (leaving out the middle man) and far less corporatist or state economy run. Productivity would flourish as individuals would be true stakeholders. The Ministry of Education would only be one node.

Niche elite school

A second, more plausible future, is that neohumanist education becomes a niche system. Particular communities prefer this type of education, but generally, the state and national levels focus more on broader secular (or religious) education. Education continues business as usual activities in support of the nation–state and global capitalism. Neohumanist education is a niche for the different (intentional spiritual communities) and for the cultural creatives — those desiring a different softer world. It is expensive and only the select few can manage it. Capitalism continues but there are pockets of different measurement regimes including Triple Bottom line (profit, social inclusion and environmentalism). The process of change is slow and painful but overtime neohumanist education filters through to public schools.

Backlash

A third future is where neohumanist type schools (Steiner, Montessori, Ananda Marga, for example) are considered detrimental to national development. They are seen as promoting values that create a fifth column, that do not train young boys and girls (but especially boys) for the tough world of capitalism and even the tougher world of a planet in strife (terrorism, ecological wars and catastrophes, China-USA wars, for example). Moreover, they challenge the national religion, be it Christianity, Islam or ... Alternative education is seen as dangerous.⁷ Funding is not denied but systemic blocks are created so that funding is nearly impossible.

Marginalised

More likely is marginalization wherein funding is allowed as long as alternative schools, schooling and education stay restricted to a few elite schools. As part of the general debate on the nature of identity, nature of diet and nature of the good life, neohumanism does not make inroads. Neohumanism, as a broader vision of the planet stays idealistic, an ethos people discuss on list serves but know full well that it is impossible. Realism remains defining; after all it is power that matters most!

Then why stay hopeful?

Which future will result? Of course, it is impossible to predict which is more likely. Writes futurist James Dator:

At least since modern times, the "real" future has been full of what others call "wild cards" or surprise unpredictable events, so it is high time [we] recognize that there is no such thing as a "normal" or "most likely" future or any of the other variations on that once-upon-a-time notion.xxxii

Plausibility becomes far more difficult to ascertain in disturbed times. There is thus a context to these scenarios—they are part of much deeper changes.

Transformations in epistemexxiii

_

⁷ Recently in response to Queensland Education allowing different faiths to be taught in the religious education course, Fiona Simpson responded that this may open the door to Satanism and witchcraft. http://christianity.rinf.com/?p=156

Neohumanism is only one force that promises to change how we see ourselves and others. Genetics, multiculturalism, the women's movement, postmodernism, information and communication technologies as well, promise to alter how we see nature, truth, reality and self. There are four levels to this epistemic transformation of the future of humanity.

The first is: transformations in what we think is the natural or Nature. **xxxiv** This is occurring as the result of the confluence of numerous trends, forces, and theories. First, there is genetics and the possibility that with the advent of the artificial womb, women and men as biological beings will be secondary to the process of creation. But it is not just genetics, which changes how we see the natural, theoretical positions arguing for the social construction of nature also undo the primacy of the natural world. Nature is not seen as the uncontested category, rather humans create natures based on their own scientific, political and cultural dispositions. We 'nature' the world. Nature is what you make it. What this means is that identity will be far less focused on past traumas—nation or religion, but on what we want it to be. This opens up the possibility of neohumanistic identity (as well as many other configurations). The door on the past is potentially closed or becomes at least not the only door we define our future identity through.

Related to the end of nature are *transformations in what we think is the Truth*. Religious truth has focused on the one Truth: All other nominations of the real pale in front of the eternal. Modernity has transformed religious truth to allegiance to the nation–state with science and technology as its hand-maidens. However, thinkers from Marx, Nietzsche, to Foucault from the West, as well as feminists and Third World scholars such as Edward Said have contested the unproblematic nature of truth. Truth is considered class-based, gender-based, culture-based, and personality-based. Knowledge is now considered particular, its arrangement based on the guiding episteme. We often do not communicate well since our worlds are so different, indeed, it is amazing we manage to understand each other at all.

The belief in one truth held traditionally by religious fundamentalists and now by scientists is under assault. Can we move towards an ecology of mind, where many ways of knowing, where truth as claimed by differing traditions is honoured, dialogued? That is, once truth has been decentred, and all perspectives are allowed, what then? Can we create a global project that unites yet respects multiplicities? Can we create a world in the context of an ecology of rights—interpenetrating rights, their expansion enhancing each other? Or are there non-negotiable fundamentals that do not allow agreement but still might allow small practical steps, taken together leading to a better world—multiple peace processes? **xxxi**

Again, with truth under challenge, neohumanism offers us an ethics beyond the postmodern—a way forward.

Central to the end of the modern is a *rethinking of what we consider as Real*. Our view of the real is being shaped partly by technology, specifically virtual technology and its promise, ultimately linked to the spiritual. Cyberspace has become a contender for the

metaphor for the future of reality. We can enter worlds wherein the links between traditional or natural physical reality and cyber/virtual reality are blurred. Will you be you? Will I be me? As we travel these worlds, will we lose our sense of an integrated self? Where is the reality principle in these new technologies? What of human suffering and misery?

However, as the real becomes increasingly metered and sold, as reality ceased to be embedded in sacred space, becoming instead commercial real estate space, others have began to argue that the ideational is returning, that the pendulum is shifting again. This echoes Sorokin'sxxxviii idea of the need for a balance between the sensate and the ideational and Willis Harmonxxxviiii argues that the physical world is only one layer of reality. The spiritual world is another. What is needed is a balance, a move towards global mind change as imaged by Rupert Sheldrake with his idea of morphogenetic fields,xxxiix Sarkar with his ideas of microvita (providing the conscious software to the hardware of the atom), Teilhard de Chardin with his idea of a noosphere,xii all of which points to the notion that we are connected at a deeper layer, perhaps at the level of Gaia. Lynn Margulis takes this to the cellular level, reminding us that it is cooperation that succeeds at this minute level.xii

Materialism, as the global organising principle, is under threat from post-rational spiritual perspectives, the new physics and the new biology. As well, many macrohistorians^{xlii} believe the historical pendulum is about to shift again.

Our reality is thus possibly changing. The old view of reality as only religious or the modern view of the real as physical are under threat from the postmodern view that reality is technologically created and from the ecological view which sees the real as relational, an ecology of consciousness, where there is no one point, but all selves are interactively needed.

The final level of deep *transformation is in what we think is Man*. Whether we are reminded of Foucault^{xliii} arguing that man is a recent, a modern category, and that his image will disappear like an etching on sand, about to be wiped away by the tide; or if we focus on the emergence of the women's movement as a nudge to man as centre, man as the centre of the world is universally contested. While the enlightenment removed God from the centre of the human universe, it did not remove man from the centre. The emerging worldview of robots, cyborgs, virtual realities, cellular automata, the worldwideweb, microvita as well as the dramatic number of individuals who believe in angels, all point to the end of Man as the central defining category.

We are thus witnessing transformations coming through the new technologies, through the worldviews of non-Western civilisations, through the women's movement, and through spiritual and Gaian perspectives. Taken together, these transformations point to the possibility but not certainty of the shaping of a new world.

Let me say this in different words. We are witnessing the end of modernity. What this means is that we are in the process of changes in Patriarchy (I am male); Individualism (I win therefore I am); Materialism (I shop therefore I am); Dualism (I think therefore I am); scientific dogmatism (I experiment therefore I know better or I have no values thus

I am right); Nationalism (I hate the other therefore I am); and humanism (humans are the measure of all things). This is however, a long term process and part of the undoing of capitalism. All these connect to create a new world, which is potentially the grandest shift in human history. We may be in the midst of galloping time, plastic time, in which the system is unstable and thus can dramatically transform. Education can focus only on training (but for which world, which future) and creating more strategic minds (but how can one strategize when reality is being disrupted), or it can enhance our capacity to not just survive but thrive^{xliv}—physically, mentally and spiritually.

In this changing world, neohumanism moves suddenly from being marginal to centre stage. It offers a way forward but not based on a particular: 'ism', rather a nested and layered approach to identity, and an integrated approach to reality.

Neohumanism reminds us that we are first humans (not nations or religions) and we are with nature (not over or against) on a collective journey toward self-realization and collective prosperity.

Readings

¹ P.R. Sarkar, Discourses on Neohumanist Education, Calcutta, Ananda Marga Publications, 1998.

² Ananda Rama, Neohumanist Education: Documentation on Neohumanist Education as Propounded by Prabhat Rainjan Sarkar, Mainz, Ananda Marga Gurukul Publications, 2000.

iii See Ivana Milojević, Educational Futures: dominant and contesting visions, London, Routledge, 2005, 10. See Michel Foucault, Power/Knowledge, New York, Pantheon, 1980.

^{iv} Milojević, op cit., 10. L. Cuban, Oversold and Underused: Computers in the classroom, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2001.

^v See Ivana Milojević & Sohail Inayatullah, 'Feminist critiques and visions of the future',: www.metafuture.org. Also in *Futures Research Quarterly*, 14(1), 1998, 35-46.

vi Jenny Gidley, Debra Bateman & Caroline Smith, Futures in Education: Principles, Practice and Potential, Melbourne, Swinburne University, 2004. See the works of Richard Slaughter for more on this. For example, Richard Slaughter, Futures Beyond Dystopia, London, Routledge Falmer, 2004. www.foresightinternational.com.au/catalogue/

vii Fred Polak, *The Image of the Future* (Trans. Elise Boulding), San Francisco, Jossey-Bass, 1973, 137-138. For more on utopianism and futures studies, see Milojević, *op cit*.

viii O.W. Markley, 'Changing Images of Man, Part I and II', Renaissance Universal Journal, 1(3 & 4), 1976.

^{ix} H. Giroux, *Theory and Resistance in Education: A pedagogy for the Opposition*, London, Heinemann, 1983, 242, quoted in Ivana Milojević, *op cit.*, 256.

^x Christopher Stone, *Should Trees Have Standing?*: *Towards Legal Rights for Natural Objects*, Los Altos, California, William A. Kaufman, 1974/1988.

 $^{^{\}rm xi}$ See the works of Hal and Sidra Stone for more on this: http://delos-inc.com/

xii See Ivana Milojević, 'Beyond Wars': http://www.ru.org/92milojevic.html. Accessed 1 May 2006.

xiii Jamake Highwater, The Primal Mind, New York, Harpers and Row Inc., 1981, 180.

xiv www.ecolo.org/lovelock/

xv www.partnershipway.org

- xvi For more on this, see, Roar Bjonnes, 'Vegetarianism: The Ethical and Ecological Arguments', and 'From Food to Feed: How Lifestock are Threatening the Planet and What You Can Do to Stop It', Articles available from Roar Bjonnes. Email him at rbjonnes@igc.org
- xvii Johan Galtung, 'Visioning a Peaceful World', in Glen Paige & Sarah Gilliatt (eds.), Buddhism and Nonviolent Global Problem-Solving, Honolulu, Hawaii, University of Hawaii, 1991, 61.
- xviii Susantha Goonatilake, Toward a Global Science: Mining Civilizational Knowledge, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1998.
- xix http://www.deepleafproductions.com/utopialibrary/text/loye-darwin.html. See David Loye, *The Great Adventure:* toward a fully human theory of evolution, Albany, State University of New York Press, 2004. And Elisabeth Sahtouris, Earthdance: Living Systems in Evolution, San Jose, Iuniverse books.com, 2000. http://www.thedarwinproject.com/loye/
- xx http://www.deepleafproductions.com/utopialibrary/text/loye-darwin.html
- xxi Elise Boulding & Kenneth Boulding, *The Future: Images and Processes*, London, Sage, 1995. See Sohail Inayatullah, 'New Futures Ahead: Genetics or Microvita', *New Renaissance*, 9(2), 2000, 6-7.
- xxii Elisabeth Sahtouris, 'Seven reasons why I remain an optimist', *Shift: At the frontiers of consciousness*, June-August, 2006, 35-41.
- xxiii For more on this, see Boulding & Boulding, op cit., London, Sage, 1995.
- xxiv See Sohail Inayatullah, Situating Sarkar, Calcutta, Gurukula Press, 1998; and Sohail Inayatullah & Jennifer Fitzgerald (eds.), Transcending Boundaries, Calcutta, Gurukula Press, 1998.
- xxv See the works of Eckhardt Tolle, including A New Earth, New York, Penguin, 2005.
- xxvi Neal Milner, 'The Emergence of Rights', Proposal to the National Science Foundation, Honolulu, Hawaii, University of Hawaii Department of Political Science, 1980.
- xxvii See Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1989. Also, see Susan Blackmore, 'Imitation and the definition of a meme', *Journal of Memetics—Evolutionary Models of Information Transmission*, 1998, 2. xxviii See Milojević, *op cit.*, 205-211.
- xxix Ibid, 4.
- xxx See Richard Slaughter with Marcus Bussey, Futures Thinking for Social Foresight, Tamsui, Tamkang University, 2005.
- xxxi see www.culturalcreatives.org. Paul Ray & Sherry Anderson, *The Cultural Creatives*, New York, Three Rivers Press, 2000.
- xxxii Personal email, 3 May 2006. For more on Dator's views of the future, see: www.futures.hawaii.edu/
- xxxiii This is elaborated in Sohail Inayatullah, 'Global Transformations', *Development*, 40(2), 1997, 31-37; and in 'Global Transformations and the End of the Natural: Towards a Communicative Response to the Future', *Journal of Applied Social Behavior*, 4(1), 1998, 1-14.
- xxxiv See, for example, Jim Dator, 'It's Only a Paper Moon', Futures, December, 1990, 1084-182.
- xxxv For more on the future of rights, see Levi Obijiofor (ed.), 'The Futures of Human Rights and Democracy', *Futuresco*, No. 5, Paris, Unesco, June 1996. In particular, see the chapters: Michael Marien, 'The Fragmented Futures of Human Rights and Democracy', 7-16; and Ziauddin Sardar, 'Future Challenges of Human Rights and Democracy', 17-24.
- xxxvi See, Harlan Cleveland, 'The Impact of Culture and Civilisation of Governance', presentation to a seminar at Brussels, 17 May 1998. As Cleveland writes: "It is observable that much real-life cooperation takes place in this manner: groups of people from differing backgrounds with different philosophies agree to take 'next stops' together *without* trying to agree on *why* they are acting together", 9.
- xxxvii Pitirim Sorokin, Social and Cultural Dynamics, Boston, Porter Sargent, 1957.
- xxxviii Willis Harmon, Global Mind Change, Indianapolis, Indiana, Knowledge Systems, 1988.
- xxxix www.sheldrake.org. Rupert Sheldrake, *Seven experiments that could change the world*, New York, Riverhead Trade, 1996.
- xl See Johan Galtung & Sohail Inayatullah (eds.), Macrohistory and Macrohistorians: Perspectives on Individual, Social and Civilizational Change, Westport, CT, Praeger, 1997.
- xli See Lynn Margulis & Dorion Sagan, Acquiring Genomes: A Theory of the Origins of Species, New York, Perseus, 2002.
- xlii For more on this, see, Galtung & Inayatullah, op cit.

xliii Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, New York, Random House, 1973.

xliv www.futurefoundation.org