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Why no peace has come, yet:

The impact of gender issues on Western education and schooling

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In this article, Ivana challenges us to explore the links between gender, peace education and underlying world-views as she argues that we can consciously teach for a peaceful future based on a transformative understanding of education.

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Introduction

This article investigates the connection between gender issues, peace and education. It does so in the context of futures visions, as they significantly impact on our actions in the present. Social change cannot occur without an image of what is wanted, or at the very least, not wanted.

Each micro or macro change as well as future visions occur in a particular social and historical context. Thus, what happens in both formal and informal education is significantly informed by what is going on in a particular society as well as at a global level. Each educator, learner and a community negotiates their sphere of endeavour and influence in the context of various, and often competing, contradictory, visions.

Given the intensity of everyday workloads it is easy to lose sight of how wider social factors impact on what is said and done in the context of education. As well, it is also easy to forget the ways history, social structure, current trends and visions for the future influence decisions and policy making in education today. This article is thus an invitation to educators to engage with some broader picture issues via personal evaluation and reflection on the ideas and views presented here.

A question relevant to this article and this edition of *Redress* is whether the situation in education in relation to gender and peace issues has been improving, regressing or moving in cycles. Before presenting my own view/position on this, let's briefly look at the requests for social and educational change that were vocalised within feminist/women's and peace movements.

Gender

While global feminists and women's movements have been very diverse, there is a common core that unifies these various (historical and contemporary) movements. This common core (of beliefs, values, epistemological positions) consists of:

- Acknowledgment that gender issues are important and that the influence of gender is pervasive.
- A main goal being the reorganisation of the world based on gender equality/partnership. There is also a commitment to addressing and changing other systems of oppressions and discriminations, for example, racism, colonialism, ageism, religious fundamentalism, anthropocentrism or any other oppression based on a hierarchy of differences.
- An assertion that current imbalances in the world exist partly because women's perspectives, experiences and knowledge are marginalised and a belief that feminist and women's perspectives can affect the world politically, culturally, economically and spiritually, and bring about significantly different futures.
- The position that knowledge is socially constructed, and that

deep structures do exist but that there is also the possibility for change.

Within the context of education, historically, the first major collective campaign by women was for equal access to education and other social institutions. Parallel to this, a second major campaign aimed at disrupting the hegemony of acquisitions of masculine/feminine knowledge and skills for each respective gender. Instead, girls and women were encouraged to enter what were historically considered 'masculine fields' and vice versa.

What followed was a critique of the ways in which education functions as the major vehicle for the reproduction of gender inequality (ie. an examination of the existence of 'hidden curricula', fragmentation of knowledge into discrete specialisations, lack of topics of interest for women, bias against women in textbooks, concentration on 'big' names and 'big' events, and teachings about the conquest and domination of the Others, including nature).

Here I briefly mention a few beliefs intrinsic to that critique:

- Education is a liberating practice aimed at changing patriarchal characters and cultures and other oppressive social structures. Education is not only about acquiring skills to survive in a particular society but also a means to transform and positively change the very society within which learning takes place.
- Artificial divisions between thought and actions, theory and practice, knowledge and politics, reason/rationality and emotion, mind and body, self and other, inner experiences and outer behaviours, caring and self-expression, communal concerns and independent judgment, private and public spheres should be removed.
- The goal is to democratise knowledge production in general and in the classroom/learning spaces in particular. Further goals include an emphasis on student/learner voice, consideration of personal experience, promotion of critical thinking and active participation, focus on difference and diversity and a concern with ethics, caring, connection and empowerment.

In the light of this, it is important to stress that 'what about the boys?' or 'male-teacher' debates, as they have been most commonly framed in Australia, completely miss the point. The aim of educational alternatives as expressed through feminist and women's movements was never to replace one hierarchical system with another, even if that one was favouring girls. Rather it was to replace a hierarchical system that disempowers both boys and girls, indeed, not just learners but also teachers, parents and community. Blaming feminism for feminisation of education so as to exclude/disadvantage male teachers and learners is easier than addressing such real issues as society still considering the 'nurturing' teaching profession as 'feminine' and the overall relatively low status of education. Both are, of course, due to the

ongoing patriarchal character of our society.

So when evaluating whether education has progressed, regressed or moved through cycles in regard to gender issues, each educator and community can make their own assessments pertinent to their own local context. The main question here is to what degree has hierarchical oppressive top-down structure of patriarchal values and cultures been changed, compared to, for example, 20, 50 or 100 years ago? As well, to what degree has the educational system changed to not continue reproducing class, cultural and gender-based hierarchies and inequalities? And, most importantly, in which ways are feminist discourses considered relevant for education, or, alternatively, utopian, naïve, ideological or a thing of the past?

Peace

Similar evaluation is possible when investigating the impact of peace theory and the peace movement on both society and education. There has been a significant change over the last 30 years in the way peace has been perceived and defined. To start with, peace is no longer perceived and defined as something that happens by itself, after war and violence subside. Rather, peace is seen as an effort, as both a *state* and a *process*, a process that needs to be continuously, consciously and actively enacted. To enact peace, various peace-keeping, peace-making and peace-building strategies are to be put in place. These strategies are to be practised at individual, local/community, social/national, and global level. They do not occur only in the realm of official politics but also in all aspects of society.

In addition, peace theorists distinguish between *negative* and *positive* peace. The former refers to the absence of war and physical violence. The latter, to the absence of all types of violence – structural, psychological, epistemological, ecological, as well as somatic. Furthermore, positive peace is about the introduction of politics, building of structures, nurturing of values and the creation of a culture that will prevent or minimise the possibility of violence arising in the first place (Summy, 2004). Positive peace refers to the establishment of life-affirming and life-enhancing values and structures and conscious strategies to achieve harmony within oneself, within community and amongst nations (ibid.).

To be able to achieve this *positive* or *holistic* peace (Groff and Smoker, 2002) what is required is a particular knowledge base as well as peace-oriented attitudes, ways of communication/behaving and skills for managing conflict. Different levels of enhancing peace in education and society are summarised in *Table 1: Dimensions of Peace in Education*.

ⁱ More detailed discussion can be found in Milojević, I. (2005) *Educational Futures: Dominant and Contesting Visions*, London: Routledge; Chapter 8 (Visions III: feminist alternatives), pp. 131–160.

Table 1: Dimensions of Peace in Educationⁱⁱ

Outer Peace:	Negative Peace:	Positive Peace:	Holistic Peace:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absence of war, absence of direct, physical violence and destruction. <p>Peace-keeping and peace-making.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absence of structural (social, economic)/systemic violence. Absence of exploitation, cultural, epistemological, economic violence, etc. Preventing or minimising possibility of violence arising in the first place. <p>Peace-building.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absence of ecological and psychological violence. Establishment of life-affirming and life-enhancing values and structures. Harmony within oneself, within community, amongst different groups of people. Peace with the world and the environment. <p>Peace-building.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global and national society. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peace-keeping forces and activities. Arms, balance of power, force deterrence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNICEF's work. Global social movements engaged in non-violent action for social justice. Ecological movement. Body-mind health revolution. Spiritual movements. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National education system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reconciliation efforts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policies related to human rights, social justice, social and environmental sustainability issues, diversity issues and issues related to discrimination and violence. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parent/community involvement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conflict resolution workshops for parents. Parental and community involvement in conflict resolution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negotiating diversity. Caring and nurturing. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whole school approach, schools as zones of peace. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better playground supervision to minimise bullying. Policing of students. Teacher development programs on conflict-resolution skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peace issues infused throughout curriculum. Peace oriented content and process. Structure/environment that supports peace. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classroom approaches, lesson plans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children's peer mediation programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-operative learning. Development of units and themes that explore positive peace. 	
Inner peace:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Person/Self, Students, Teachers, Admin. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External control psychology (punishment/reward system). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emotional literacy. Use of relaxation techniques. Development of wisdom and compassion. Development of personal ethics. From reflection to social action. 	

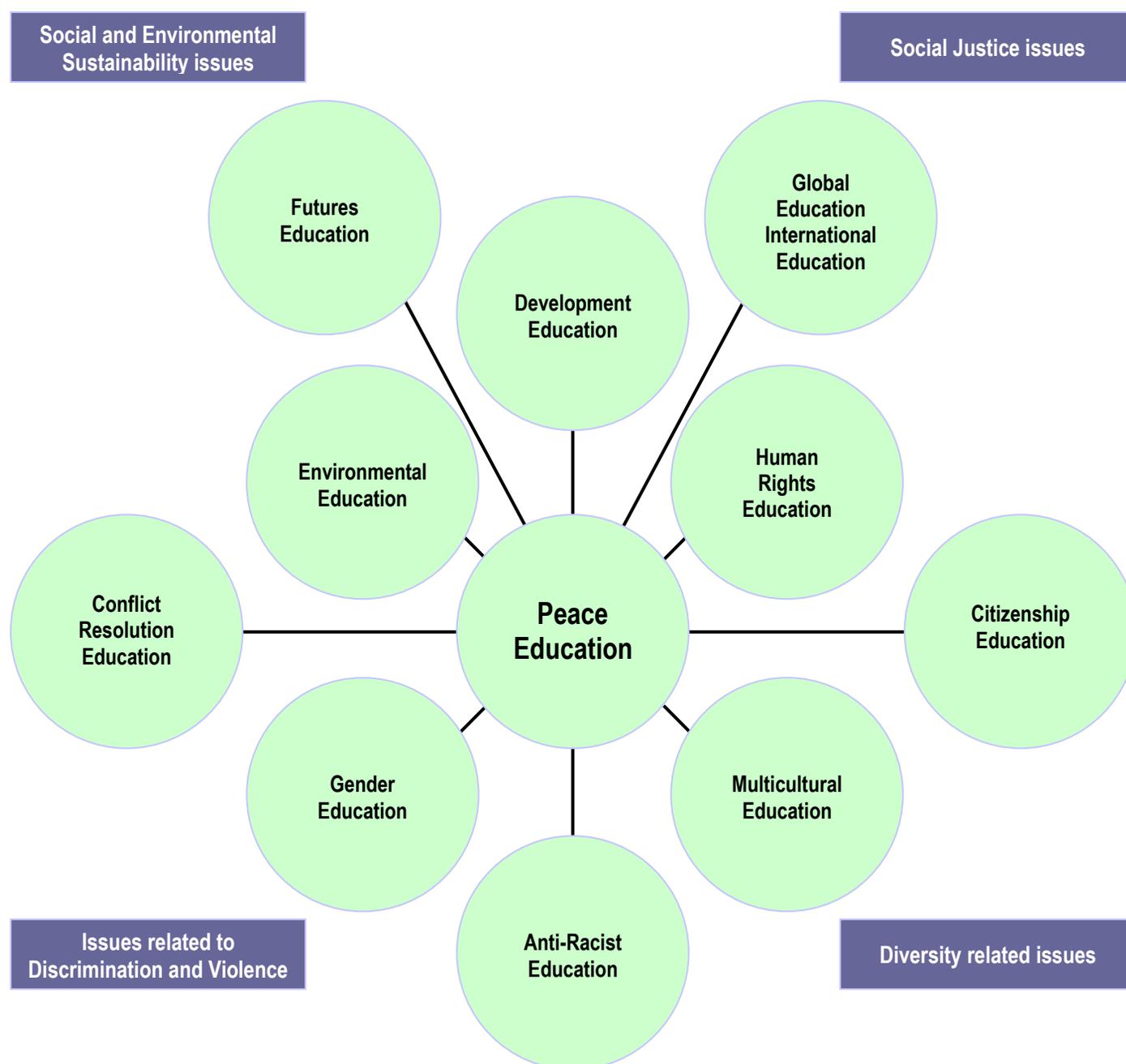
ⁱⁱ Adapted from Hutchinson, F. (1996), Summy, R. (2004), Groff, L. and Smoker, P. (2002).

The connection between peace and social justice issues in general and gender issues in particular is shown in *Table 2: Peace Education Issues and Connections*. Visions by educators that aimed to change violent cultures and bellicose societies in the second half of the 20th century crystallised around the issues of Environmental and Social Sustainability, Discrimination and Violence, Social Justice and Diversity. The main aim of these educators has been to challenge dominator world-view (Eisler, 2000) which puts into operation a whole range of practices that reinforce hierarchical relationships between humans, as well as the supremacy of humans over other living beings. Such practices impact widely – from family relations and child rearing to the way global economy is structured.

Phenomena such as xenophobia, racism and religious fundamentalism not only arise from the dominator world-view, they in turn help maintain it. Together with sexism, wherein everything associated with women and the feminine is seen as inferior (other), these phenomena remain the main fuel for both the dominator society and most dangerous forms of direct violence.

So if an educator is to assess the infusion of peace theory and practice within a particular educational setting, the question to ask is: *to what degree has this setting focused on negative and to what degree on positive and holistic peace initiatives? In which ways is the main approach to peace reactive (ie. resolution of conflict after it occurs) and in which ways proactive (as in establishment of cultures, values and systems that promote positive and holistic peace)? And lastly, do peace oriented approaches mainly*

Table 2: Peace Education Issues and Connectionsⁱⁱⁱ



ⁱⁱⁱ Adapted from Harris and Morrison (2003) and from Tide's Adjectival Education map (<http://www.tidec.org/Tide~talk/essential-learning/adjectival-educations.html>). Accessed November, 2007.)

Peace Education Issues and Connections
Milojević, I., 2004

promote superficial peace without confronting underlying issues or is there an effort to educate for critical understanding in terms of creating a peaceful future?

Which way towards peaceful futures?

Any strategy towards enacting peace inevitably relies on an underlying world-view, vision of the future and a temporal (short-term/long-term) framework. But what types of reforms are needed if the creation of global peace is the main goal for the future? Currently several scenarios are most commonly expressed. These include:

1. *'back to the past'* ('back to the basics' demands in education);
2. maintenance and slow *evolution of the current mainstream educational model* through a reformist 'globo-tech' model; and
3. *radical transformation approaches* that highlight the need for social, cultural and epistemic transformation and change.

These plausible futures qualitatively differ in terms of the underlying world-views and attitudes towards peace, conflict and violence that underpin them. They also differ in the underlying gender politics that informs each particular scenario, and in turn, each particular scenario envisions different roles for different genders. In sum, Western educators are currently facing a choice and are constantly negotiating between three main archetypal futures scenarios:

Archetype 1: Back to the Past – Reflected in the words of journalist Andrew Bolt:

I should worry when teachers preach, not teach, about the 'stolen generations', for example. Or about global warming, asylum seekers, Iraq or our history, and all those other emotional subjects where they make it seem rude to ask for the facts.

I feel cheated and deceived by our education system. ...every single handout painted Western countries... as some kind of big, evil polluting Satans responsible for a largely natural process. Then in English, teachers would continuously show their anti-war bias when we studied media texts.

Bolt, 2004a

Why not an inquiry into the virulent spread of soft-discipline teaching and don't-correct instruction, and the decline of 'hard' subjects such as real history, real geography and the rules of grammar?

Bolt, 2004b

In the Western world, this scenario seems popular among

conservatives and traditionalists. The attraction of the 'back to the past' scenario is in avoiding and curing 'futures shock' by going back to the known. This scenario I have described in detail elsewhere (Milojević, 2005: 2—4) with the focus on how it ties with/is informed by religious (Christian) fundamentalism. In sum, the main features of the back to the past scenario are:

- The existence of the idealised strict father model (Lakoff, 2004: 6—8), so that family can be protected and supported in the dangerous, competitive and difficult world and children taught right from wrong.
- The belief in one truth and the salvation through religion/external God.
- The desire for a strong unified nation and nuclear, hierarchical and authoritarian families.
- The conviction that the strong economy is based on people working hard and pursuing their own self-interests.
- The underlying assumption that those that are not among the winners in the economy are deficient in some regard and should be either left to their own devices or helped through charity.
- Foreign policy to be predominantly based on the tactics of arms, balance of power, force and deterrence (Harris and Morrison, 2003: 16).
- The belief in Western civilisation as the pinnacle of human development.

In sum, the main characteristics of the back to the past/basics scenario, including the position on how to achieve social peace and what formal education should look like are summarised in *Table 3: Comparing educational models/futures visions*.

Archetype 2: Globalisation, New Information and Communication Technologies

To *compete* in today's world, young Queenslanders need exciting and flexible pathways from school to work, training or further education... That is why we are tailoring our solutions to give them a range of options to help them achieve the academic or vocational education qualification they need to *compete* in the world of work... The Smart State means positioning Queensland to take its place among the best in the world. It is about encouraging innovation. It means educating and skilling people so they can *compete* for and create jobs in emerging fields, and revitalise traditional industries...

Queensland the Smart State, Education and Training Reforms for the Future: A White Paper, The State of Queensland, 2002, p. 3 and 5, (italics added)

Table 3: Comparing educational models/futures visions

	Social peace is to be achieved through...	Efforts in education	Problems with the philosophy and approach
Back to the past/basics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservative, trialled methods. • Unified nation and family. • Strong economy. • Balance of power, force and deterrence. • The dominance of the strongest and most successful. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on 'truth' as defined by the most powerful social group. • Religious and social truths not open to negotiation. • Teachers dispensers of these accumulated established truths, 'common sense' and the 'basics'. • Focus on three Rs (reading, writing, arithmetic). • Firmness and punitive disciplinary methods, including corporal punishment. • Focus on peace-keeping, power over and peace through strength. • <i>Main goal:</i> preparation for a proper and moral life, in accordance with Scriptures. • <i>Values:</i> hard work, morality, prudence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher goals take precedence over human life. • Focus on punishment and punitive measures. • Violent methods seen as crucial in achieving peace. • Anthropocentrism. • Nationalism. • Orientalism/racism.
High-tech progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in poverty by opening up the markets globally. • Technological surveillance. • Enforcing Western-style democracy globally. • Most powerful arms in the hands of most industrially and economically developed nations. • Disciplining 'rough' nations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Globalising student body and globalising curriculum. • Students seen as consumers. • Privatisation, ie. voucher system. • Self-directed, student-centred lifelong learning. • Fast acquisition of skills. • Networked classroom. • Internet and cyber-based learning. • <i>Main goal:</i> measurable technical production of skilled, flexible, movable global worker. • <i>Values:</i> achievement, success, flexibility, adaptability to change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Western imperialism. • Furthering of environmental degradation. • Hierarchical, unequal and insecure social environment. • Individualisation. • Competition.
Social, cultural, epistemic transformation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the basis/root causes of conflict and negotiation of different perspectives. • Peace-keeping, making and building. • Peace through justice, transformation/pacifism, politics/institution-building, sustainability, education. • Peace at all levels: from individual inner peace, through local, community, nation-based to international, global and planetary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Adjectival' education initiatives: peace, conflict-resolution, futures, environmental, development, global, international, human rights, multicultural, anti-racist, gender, futures, citizenship education. • Education seen as instrumental in bringing about positive social change. • Knowledge integrated, incorporation of the cognitive and the emotional, multiple intelligences and literacies, curriculum negotiated. • Knowledge for co-operation and connection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation within current 'dominator' and 'quick fix' societies. • Focus on long-term impact makes it difficult to measure success of strategies. • Connection with 'left wing' politics – ideological and dogmatic at times. • Diversity of approaches prevents unified and efficient social engagement. • Overloading of curriculum. • Switch to new paradigm requires whole-scale

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interactive teaching and learning, participatory learning and classroom practices. • Curricula interdisciplinary, flexible, problem-oriented, knowledge-based, holistic, integrated, practical, experiential. • <i>Main goal:</i> to enable fulfillment of full student's potential as human beings, irrespective of their gender, race, ethnicity, religion, ability, culture, sexual preference. • <i>Values:</i> social justice, positive peace, diversity, equity, inclusion, social and environmental sustainability, critical thinking, 'empowerment'/raised consciousness, active participation in public life. 	approaches.
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The paragraph above is typical of the language that appears within globalisation discourse. The globalisation and information narrative typically goes like this:

The world is changing at an ever-accelerating pace. Life, society, and economics are becoming ever more complex. The nature of work is radically altering. Jobs are disappearing at an unprecedented rate. It is an age of uncertainty. The past is less and less a guide to the future.

Rose and Nicholl, 1997: 1

What you need is a cutting-edge program that puts you (or your kids) ahead of the rest. Learn faster. Remember more. Think creatively. Anyone who wants to excel in the twenty-first century must master these core success skills. Based on the latest research by leading scientists and psychologists, *Accelerated Learning for the 21st Century* brings you the most effective method ever developed for learning – one that can help you succeed amid the increasing competition and ever-changing technology of the twenty-first century.

ibid. back cover

The unchallenged assumption is that the world is nothing short of a battlefield or a gigantic sport stadium wherein the smart, hard-working, well-trained, competent, informed and self-interested rise

while the others fall.

The main underlying beliefs behind the globalisation and new information and communication technologies scenarios are:

- The world is competitive and it is important to learn how to compete successfully.
- Economic globalisation and new information and communication technologies are leading the way towards global progress, peace and stability.
- The whole world is going in the direction of liberal democracy and towards “Western forms of government, political economy and political community... the ultimate destination which the entire human race will eventually reach” (Burchill and Linklater, 1996: 28).
- Economic globalisation is going to bring more material benefits globally and more consumer and employment choices.
- New technologies will be instrumental in bringing about cyber-democracy, resolving the environmental crisis, in liberating people from the limits of time, geography, class, disability, race and gender as well as from repetitive boring tasks thus creating more time for leisure.

These and other elements of this high-tech progress scenario are presented in *Table 3*.

Archetype 3: Social, Cultural, Epistemic Transformation

Popular among the 'Left' this archetype is about a different vision for the world, based on values such as justice, equity, fairness, peace, inner and outer transformation, security, and a long-term view. Economic development is seen as important but is also defined in broader terms. Indicators of economic progress are connected with long-term indicators of continuation (indicators for sustainability) and horizontal indicators of stress (indicators for quality of life). Technological development is less spectacular and focused on 'softer' technologies.

Other main features of the Social, Cultural, Epistemic Transformation scenario are:

- Diversity is seen as the leading principle in successful adaptation and survival and both the family and gender are organised in accordance to diversity principles.
- There is a belief that human efforts are to be invested in conflict prevention and resolution as peace is seen as the prerequisite for progress.
- The greatest value is placed on internal awareness and understanding rather than purely on external measures. Education is given priority as it is understood that without awareness of social and natural processes, interpersonal and group relationships as well as the psychological and physiological processes within the self, humanity cannot prosper.
- People are seen as producers of care for each other and not only the producers of commodities.
- Security is redefined to include security from violence, security of income, education and health care, environmental security as well as security from poverty, ignorance and illiteracy.
- It is 'people' that are considered to be at the centre of all development. True democracy means that global governance has to be accountable and transparent. A just new world order needs to reflect the composition of the globe.
- Family and community life need to be transformed towards a partnership model of gender and generational relationships.
- Military spending needs to be reduced and eventually abolished.

In addition, this vision is based on what Lakoff terms this 'nurturing parent world-view', describing it in the following way:

Both parents are equally responsible for raising the children. The assumption is that children are born good and can be made better. The world can be made a better place, and our job is to work on that. The parents' job is to nurture their children and to raise their

children to be nurturers of others.

What does nurturance mean? It means two things: empathy and responsibility. If you have a child, ...you have a responsibility – you have to take care of this child. Since you cannot take care of someone else if you are not taking care of yourself, you have to take care of yourself enough to be able to take care of the child... Therefore it is your moral responsibility to be a happy, fulfilled person... Further, it is your moral responsibility to teach your child to be a happy, fulfilled person who wants others to be happy and fulfilled. That is part of what nurturing family life is about. It is a common precondition for caring about others.

Lakoff, 2004: 11—13

Other elements of this scenario are also presented in *Table 3*.

Comparisons and concluding remarks

The National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools which has been endorsed by all State and Territory Ministers of Education and sent to all schools in Australia (DEST, 2005) provides an interesting document for analysis. While peace and non-violence are explicitly mentioned under the value of 'responsibility', and while other themes connected to the promotion of peace and non-violence also feature, the overall framework of this initiative is the 'back to the basics' conservative scenario. That is, themes such as nationalism, peace through strength, individualism, anthropocentrism and one group/gender/cultural superiority feature.

By contrast, my belief is that real alternatives are provided in the context of social, cultural and epistemic transformation, that is, any time patriarchy, racism, dogmatism, classism, social conservatism, religious fundamentalism and anthropocentrism are resisted and alternatives provided healthier foundations for building positive peace are laid.

It is my conviction that there is a link between the current resurgence of war and security discourse, increase in authoritarianism, religious fundamentalism and political conservatism and past and contemporary gender politics. Efforts in both society and education to address patriarchy – as both a system of organising human affairs and a world-view – have only gone so far. In education, there was a sense of 'going against the grain' when initiating change, of initiatives simply 'not working', or of the pendulum swinging too much to the 'other side'. In addition to the backlash coming from conservatives, there was also too much in-group disagreement amongst those advocating change. And there were some serious misinterpretations of what it would

mean to have truly equitable and peaceful schools and societies.

Underlying world-views are pervasive. Belief in achieving peace through 'strength' and 'security' is linked to more conservative gender politics, as well as to nationalism and anthropocentrism. Alternatively, desiring positive/holistic peace and social transformation is linked to a different view of desired gender relations and family/community interactions.

While most people do want peace, they see it, define it and look at achieving it in a wide range of ways. Violence in all its forms needs to be addressed and real alternatives which deal with the root causes of these various forms of violence provided.

So what is to be done in our times of global war, rising conservatism, neo-liberalism and fundamentalism as well as in times of 'post-feminist', 'raunch culture' (Levy, 2005)? The same thing enlightened/futures-thinking educators have already been doing for decades if not centuries, working and teaching for a different future based on a different view of peace and how it can be achieved. Of course, the more effort is put into the direction of envisioning and practising positive, holistic peace alternatives, the easier it will be to change our contemporary historical moment of resurrected and reformed patriarchy and negative peace/peace through strength reality. We have to believe that the pendulum is bound to eventually swing to the other side, and work towards that.



NO WE'RE NOT MAKING A TOY WISH LIST.
WE'RE DOING AN EXPOSÉ ON ARMS
SHIPMENTS TO TOYLAND!

Bülbül cartoon with permission of the artist.

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