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## 15. BEYOND HOMOGENISATION OF GLOBAL EDUCATION

*Do alternative pedagogies such as Steiner Education have anything to offer an emergent global/ising world? <sup>i</sup>*

### GLOBALISATION AS A HOMOGENISING INFLUENCE

One of the greatest obstacles to creating learning societies for the future is the model of Western culture—and by default, the model of education—being promoted by globalisation.

Sometimes called 'Americanisation' of the 'rest of the world', the processes of globalisation have amplified the modernity project. The primary tools of globalisation—other than economic 'development'—are mass education and communication technologies, particularly the Internet and the mass media ('virtual colonisation') (Gupta, 2000). Providing both opportunities and threats, globalisation's promoters argue that it is creating an improved economic climate within which educational, health and other socio-cultural 'improvements' will thrive. However, the 'development' model foisted upon the 'developing' world by the West, in the name of modernisation has been regarded for decades by many non-Western scholars, and anthropologists of development, as a second wave of cultural imperialism (Escobar, 1995; Lemish, Drotner, et al., 1998; Hunter, 2006). The realisation that globalisation has the power to exponentially increase cultural transgression has led me to coin the term "Modernity Project Mark II" to highlight its amplified effects (Gidley, 2001). On the other hand as feminist futures researcher Ivana Milojević points out, it also creates "opportunities for global transformation based on human unity" (Milojević, 2000). Such emancipatory opportunities will be addressed later in the chapter.

### IS MASS 'EDUCATION FOR ALL' THE 'TROJAN HORSE' OF NEO-COLONIALISM?

Over a decade ago (1990), at the "Education for All" (EFA)<sup>ii</sup> meeting in Jomtein, Thailand, the World Bank put forward a model of education for the 'developing world'. This model has been heavily critiqued by a number of educationists and critical social theorists who cite it as being a further attempt to assert the values and culture of the Western materialist worldview (Jain, 2000).

It is well known that 'education' is a powerful method of enculturating—even 'brainwashing'—a people. A form of mass education that transplants an educational model from one cultural system, such as Euro-American, into another very

different culture while retaining the original standards and categories of knowledge, is tantamount to cultural genocide (Nandy, 2000).

While at first glance the goal of the meeting—“to universalize primary education”—might appear laudible, an unpacking of the details of how this is being implemented presents a dimmer picture. In regards to the World Bank's goal of increasing 'literacy levels' the concept of literacy itself has not been contested (Hoppers, 2000). And yet, in educational discourses in the 'Anglophone world' narrow conceptualisations of literacy have been undergoing serious critique from educationists and futures researchers for decades. The privileging of narrowly-defined 'textual literacy'—reading and writing text—over broader representations, such as 'social literacy', 'oral literacy', 'emotional literacy', 'futures literacy', 'spiritual literacy', reflects the pragmatic manifestation of narrowly defined conceptualisations of human intelligence. Diverse educational and psychological discourses that could underpin the possibility of broader literacies have arisen over decades. These discourses include notions of “postformal” thinking (Commons et al., 1982), “multiple intelligences” (Gardner, 1984), “cognitive holism” (Anderson, 1985), “holistic education” (Miller, 1988, 1990), and “imaginative and aesthetic education” (Read, 1943; Steiner, 1972; Schiller, 1977 (1795); Eisner, 1985; Arnheim, 1989; Egan, 1990). It is apparent that the World Bank has followed the trend in mainstream American education—which is still tied to the factory model—thereby overlooking the impact of these alternative discourses when designing the EFA programs. Furthermore, educational futures researchers, aware of the failure of the Western educational model to provide young people with confidence, hope, a sense of meaning and a love of life-long learning, have engaged in exploring alternative educational processes which transcend the narrow bounds of the three Rs (reading, writing and arithmetic) (Slaughter, 1989; Gidley, 1996; Hutchinson, 1996).

A reformulated twenty-first century 'Education for All' program that sought to honour cultural diversity and the complexities of a 'postindustrial' world, would investigate alternatives to the factory model of education. Critical, holistic, integral, postformal, and other 'postmodern' educational approaches may provide assistance in the transition from traditional forms of schooling—little changed since the inception of mass education—toward educational styles more suited to the complex current and emergent needs of a globalising world (Freire, 1972; Kotsch & Colfax, 1990; Beare & Slaughter, 1993; Hutchinson, 1996; Wildman & Inayatullah, 1996; Egan, 1997; Kincheloe, 1999; Miller, 1999; Schwartz, 1999; Dighe, 2000; Inayatullah & Gidley, 2000; Horn, 2001; Sternberg, 2001; Thompson, 2001; Bussey, 2002; Fien, 2002; Gidley, 2002; Hicks, 2002; Milojević, 2002; Wilber, 2003; Esbjörn-Hargens, 2005). Additionally, perhaps it is also time for Western education to learn something from the 90 per cent of the world's oral cultures, referred to by Ong, who primarily use symbolic systems of meaning making transfer, such as story-telling, myth and dance while 'cultural memory' for this still survives (Ong, 1982). The later part of this chapter will discuss the potential contribution of alternatives to the traditional 'factory model' of education, by exploring one such alternative educational approach that arose in Europe yet

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maximises diverse learning processes (Steiner, 1965, 1967, 1972, 1976, 1981, 1982).

#### ENCULTURATION OR COMMODIFICATION: WHITHER OUR YOUTH?

Kincheloe (2002) points out that corporations are now the most prominent source of our cultural curriculum. No longer are schools, churches, and families dominant in the education of young people. Corporations are. (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2004)

Although Joe Kincheloe's claim may at present apply mainly to America, before long it is likely to be the case globally. Since (at least) the European Enlightenment the West has claimed cultural superiority. With this self-imposed authority (at first European, now American), it has sought to 'develop' the 'underdeveloped world' according to its development discourses of 'deficit' and 'disadvantage' rather than 'diversity' (Dighe, 2000). This style of global monoculture underpinned as it is by Western scientific positivism,<sup>iii</sup> has in recent decades been amplified by the information technologies and the economic rationalist paradigm of commodification. Shirley Steinberg and Joe Kincheloe demonstrate how the corporatisation of our society and our culture of consumerism has led to the "corporate construction of childhood" and refer to the lack of understanding, pedagogy and contextualisation in this new "children's culture" (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2004). Joseph Chilton Pearce takes this even further, pointing to several 'everyday' aspects of contemporary American (and increasingly global) life, that are contributing to deteriorating family and social structures (Pearce, 1992).

Like all great civilisations of the past that have reached their zenith before they begin to decay, the 'over-developed' Western culture, with its foundations rooted in scientific materialism<sup>iv</sup> has been for decades showing signs of decay. The litany of symptoms exhibited by many young people of the 'most developed' nations, exemplify this with great poignancy. Whilst discourses on 'global youth issues' have primarily focused on health and education in the 'developing' world, the emerging figures related to mental health issues for young people in the 'overdeveloped' world confirm that 'development' as part of the modernity project is seriously flawed. Research shows that many youth of the West are increasingly manifesting high rates of depression (15-24%), eating disorders and other forms of mental illness, (Bashir & Bennett 2000). Comparative studies (primarily OECD countries) indicate that when the figures for all mental health disorders are combined (including ADHD, Conduct Disorder, Depression, Anxiety, etc.) as many as 18–22 per cent of children and adolescents suffer from one or more of these disorders (Raphael, 2000). In Australia there have been increases in youth homelessness and school truancy which have created an underclass of 'street kids', disenfranchised by society, yet often by choice. Increasing numbers are committing suicide and other violent crimes at an alarming rate, and are expressing a general malaise, loss of meaning and hopelessness about the future (Eckersley, 1993; Gidley & Wildman, 1996). Youth suicides among young males (15-24) in

Australia have doubled in the past 20 years (Mitchell, 2000). Sohail Inayatullah refers to these phenomena as symptoms of 'postindustrial fatigue' (Inayatullah, 2002). I call it 'the malaise of materialism'. Film director Peter Weir has described Western culture as a 'toxic culture', since violent school shootings incidents by and of fellow students in the US.

Before going further it might be worth considering what is missing from the Western materialist cultural model that may throw light on these issues. The epistemology of positivist scientific thinking that underpins Western culture follows both the empiricist and Cartesian traditions that developed during the European Enlightenment. More recently referred to as 'instrumental rationality'<sup>v</sup> it is a reductionist, materialistic mode of thinking which, in my interpretation, excludes such diverse ways of knowing as imagination, inspiration, intuition.

As the epistemology of the technologically advanced Western culture its global dominance of other cultures discounts the mythic, aesthetic, subjective, spiritual, traditional ways of knowing of most of the earth's cultures. Based as it is on a view of human nature that lacks a spiritual dimension (divorcing psychology from theology, science from ethics), all further fragmentations stem from this inherent tendency to segregate rather than integrate. Richard Tarnas refers to these developments as the "post-Copernican double bind" (Tarnas, 1991) where the dominant worldview led humans to experience the following three estrangements:

- cosmological estrangement from their home at the centre of the cosmos (with Copernicus declaring that the Earth was not the centre of the universe);
- ontological estrangement from their own being with the separation that came with Descartes' dictum "I think, therefore I am";
- finally, building on these new rational/materialist foundations came the epistemological estrangement from the philosopher Kant's proposition that all human knowledge is interpretive: that the "thing in itself" cannot be known other than through what is perceived by the mind that views it.

As a longer-term result of this cultural worldview, combined with the added pressures of increased mechanisation and globalisation, several major factors (inherent in the Western materialist cultural paradigm) have arisen in my view that have contributed to a failure of healthy enculturation of young people. These include the triumph of individualism/egoism over community; the colonisation of imagination; the secularisation of culture—and its counter response—fundamentalism of religion; and environmental degradation now a realistic fear for young people as 'global warming' has been firmly identified as a presence. These factors have been discussed in detail elsewhere (Gidley, 2002).

A major concern is that the implementation of mass education based on a monocultural Western model, with its homogenising and corporatising cultural influence, is likely to bring with it these factors as well.

#### EMANCIPATORY POTENTIAL OF GLOBALISATION

On the other hand, from a Taoist perspective, everything contains the seed of its opposite. Hence, even whilst the globalisation project (“Modernity Project Mark II”) threatens to be potentially more damaging in its colonising and homogenising power than Modernity Project Mark I, it also holds the potential for the greatest emancipation (Gidley, 2001). It is suggested by Bhandari that what is needed is to be able to distinguish between the hegemonic and emancipatory potential of the diverse strands of modernity (Bhandari, 2000). There are several emerging opportunities that can be harnessed. Some of these, paradoxically, co-exist within the Western model itself:

- The inherent focus on individualism in the Western cultural worldview as discussed above can be transformational if used selflessly, for the greater good. Individual human agency then becomes a powerful force to counter the homogenising effects of a dominant monoculture.
- The counter-materialistic, alternative streams within the Western educational and cultural paradigm that have developed in parallel with mainstream culture, become ever more active the stronger materialist culture becomes (e.g., the educational alternative discussed below).
- The networking potential of free human beings to use global networks for the common good is beginning to be harnessed. For example, it has also enabled the authors discussed earlier to publish and circulate their book on the Internet thereby promoting their concerns about globalisation globally (Jain, 2000)!

Processes need to be put in place that will foster the potential of globalisation to increase these opportunities to encourage diversity. Policy, research and practical processes have been suggested by Jan Visser (2000).

#### RECLAIMING WISDOM AS A GOAL OF EDUCATION

The industrial worldview that underpins mainstream education in the West, and thereby the processes instituted by the World Bank in its EFA agenda, has not only been critiqued by educationists in the developing world. Much of the youth futures research over the past decade has demonstrated that many young people in the industrialised world have become fearful of the future, disempowered and disenchanted by the education system (Slaughter, 1989; Eckersley, 1995; Gidley & Wildman, 1996; Hutchinson, 1996). These futures researchers recommend more holistic, integrated teaching methods using imagination (to be elaborated later), pro-active social skills (such as conflict resolution, cooperative learning methods) and specific futures methodologies (such as creating scenarios, visualising preferred futures, action plans).

It has been argued by some educational futurists that the limitations of the instrumental rationality of Western scientific positivism has rendered it as being well past its ‘use-by date’<sup>vi</sup> as a viable dominant epistemology for the future (Wildman & Inayatullah, 1996). The ‘global problematique’<sup>vii</sup> has become so

complex that a worldview based on instrumental rationality with its fragmented disciplines and specialisations is no longer able to cope with finding solutions.

I propose that what is needed are integrated education systems at both the school and tertiary levels which are underpinned by higher order knowledge systems and inclusive—or integral—cosmologies (Gidley, 2006). These may include the traditional, indigenous knowledge systems of many cultures, as well as such spiritually-based cosmologies, or ‘perennial philosophies’ as may be found to underpin several alternative education approaches found in the West, (for example, the underpinning philosophy of Steiner education, discussed below). Such systems reclaim wisdom as the goal of learning and transformation as the goal of a learning society. There is also an emerging movement from within the psychology discipline to identify and acknowledge *wisdom* as a construct, and even a goal of education (Arlin, 1999; Sternberg, 2001; Sternberg, 2005). In addition, the emergence of integral consciousness as a higher-order, ‘post-formal’ or ‘post-rational’ mode of thinking is being fostered by Ken Wilber’s Integral Institute in the US (Wilber, 2004), which draws inspiration from the pioneering work of Sri Aurobindo Ghose in India (Aurobindo Ghose, 1990 (1914)), and Jean Gebser in Europe during the middle of the last century (Gebser, 1991). Some implications of this integral approach for futures in education are discussed elsewhere in this volume: “Integral Perspectives to School Educational Futures”.

While it is becoming increasingly vital that school and university education are underpinned by such higher order knowledge systems and integral cosmologies, this is by no means to suggest that education (and learning) are confined to schools, colleges and universities. The industrial, factory model of education as schooling being confined to factory-like buildings for persons between the ages of four and twenty-something, must urgently be regenerated by spatial and temporal expansion into life-long learning in physical, architectural and social spaces that breathe with the community. The creative imagination required to foster such transformations has been for too long impeded by the limitations of the reductionist school education model. It will be shown later in this article that cultivation of imagination in education enables young people to have more positive, creative and empowered visions of the future. This would seem to be an important step in creating learning societies with wisdom as their vision.

#### TOWARDS VISIONS OF A TRANSFORMED SOCIETY

If I were to begin to envision a future transformed society it would be far removed from the monocultural variety that globalisation is attempting to impose. There would be no one ‘ideal society’ as the meta-narratives of communism, national socialism and late capitalism have tried to institute.

The critical value of cultural ‘diversity’ to the survival of human society as a whole would be paramount. This diversity would be found *between cultures* (for example, Chinese and Ayurvedic medicines would be equally valued with Western allopathic medicine, so that genuine dialogue between practitioners could actually discover which approach best suited which situation). Some beginnings are being

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made in Australia with the establishment of holistic medical practices that integrate paramedical (e.g., massage, physiotherapy) and non-Western practices (e.g., acupuncture) into traditional medical clinics. Dommers and Welch have explored the development of 'systems maps' for general practitioners to facilitate more integrated health service models (2001). In addition, the diversity would be found *within cultures* whereby the plurality of possible ways of knowing would be encouraged at all levels of education, including university learning. This would involve a revaluing of the arts, the practical skills, and contemplative processes as being of equal value with the rational in contributing to an integral knowledge paradigm for the future.

However, such a vision could not be implemented without great struggle. There is much powerful vested interest in maintaining the status quo whereby the few who play Monopoly with the vast majority of the world's power and wealth cling desperately to their monocultural myth of globalisation that commodifies and homogenises all values into the economic 'bottom line'. In the same way that it has taken decades for the world's scientists to admit that disregard for the environment had resulted in global warming, it may also take more decades before the grassroots visions suggested here will develop the critical mass that is needed for transformation into a learning (rather than consuming) society. In the vision presented here, the economic bottom line would be superseded by what has become known as the 'triple bottom line' where the impacts of any enterprise/policy on the environment and the social/human are equally valued with economic impact. Taking this even further, Sohail Inayatullah has introduced the concept of spirituality as the 'fourth bottom line' (Inayatullah, 2006).

To summarise, this vision of a transformed society would no longer represent a hegemonic, linear and hierarchical global monoculture based on the endless acquisition of fragmented 'bytes' of information, but rather, a pluralistic, multi-layered network of cultures within societies, committed to nurturing diverse, meaning-centred, integrated, wisdom-based cultures.

A key question is: How might we educate children and young people across the globe to facilitate this vision?

#### AN 'ALTERNATIVE' APPROACH THAT FOSTERS 'EDUCATION FOR WISDOM'

On a visit I made to Nepal a few years ago, while trekking in some reasonably remote Himalayan villages, some children took me by the hand when they discovered that I was, at that time, a teacher. They excitedly ran me away to show off with pride their new school. It was a dark little square room with straight rows of seats, a blackboard, and some white chalk with each child having a little piece of black slate so they could 'learn to write'. I tried to look happy for them while inwardly wondering how it is that only the driest crumbs of the Western educational model, that is already failing our own children in droves, could be being offered to these lively Nepalese children. I now wonder if this is what is meant by 'education for all'. And I'm certainly not suggesting that this could be improved by giving these little schools a couple of computers as well. Having been

involved for 10 years in founding, pioneering and teaching in a Rudolf Steiner school in rural Australia, I have guided numerous children from their sixth/seventh year to puberty. As a responsible participant in their (and my) joyous learning of every imaginable subject through stories, drawing, painting, singing, movement, drama, music, poetry, mythology and play, I knew learning could be otherwise. And surprise, surprise! The children also became literate in the process—and not just literate in the narrow sense. Rather they developed what I would call broad literacies (to read for meaning, to write creatively, to share, to respect nature, to imagine worlds beyond their immediate one, to have social confidence and to love learning).

The educational processes described here are not necessarily new, but were indicated for their significance in a child's education by Rudolf Steiner (1861–1924), in Europe in the 1920s. Steiner, already a century ago, was decrying the limitations of the Western materialist cultural model. He was a scientist, philosopher, artist and visionary who contributed significantly to the fields of education, agriculture (biodynamics), medicine and the arts, lecturing and writing extensively on all imaginable subjects in the first quarter of last century. Arguably a futurist and macrohistorian, he called for science to be reunited with art and metaphysics through 'spiritual science'. In addition to valuing the conceptual/rational development of the child and the practical, real life context of education (also recommended by John Dewey), Steiner strongly emphasised the cultivation of the imagination through aesthetic, artistic processes and highly valued the use of oral language through poetry, drama and story telling (Steiner, 1964; Dewey, 1972).

The educational movement that has grown out of Steiner's initiative has resulted in the establishment of hundreds of schools worldwide. Considered by many of its proponents to be an educational model, this problematic belief has become one of its weaknesses, as some interpreters of Steiner's approach can be quite dogmatic about processes. In fact, Steiner repeatedly stated that he was not laying down dogma, but rather elucidating knowledge of the wisdom of humanity (anthroposophy) to be creatively worked on by the artistry of each individual teacher:

All instruction must therefore be permeated by art, by human individuality, for of more value than any thought-out curriculum is the individuality of the teacher and educator. It is individuality that must work in the school. (Steiner, 1967, p. 142)

From my reading of Steiner, I believe that he intended individual educators to use his teachings as a basis from which to be creative themselves and to reinvent the processes for different contexts (temporal and geographic). There is still a great deal of untapped potential in this area, as the temptation of many communities is to transplant a nineteenth century German educational 'model' into every cultural context.

The conceptual approach of Steiner education is an integrated approach to the development of the child. In particular, the cultivation of the student's vivid and



healthy imagination (compared with just the dry, abstract intellect) is considered to be extremely important. The foremost tool for this in Steiner schools is the use of story-telling as a pre-eminent medium of teaching. Stories and pictures are used with small children to introduce the letters and numbers, and with older ones to teach anything from sewing to complex mathematical and scientific concepts. The individual subjects, where possible, are integrated rather than segregated (e.g., geometry may be integrated with biology through studying flower and leaf patterns; maths may be woven into music lessons; and also important social and moral lessons can easily be integrated with stories of great characters from history), while the content where possible is presented thematically. In addition, the recognition of the fundamental interconnectedness of all things as a way of knowing and learning aligns this approach with many indigenous and other non-Western epistemologies. This integrated approach is supported today by recent literature on the importance of contextualising knowledge and proponents of situated learning, not to mention the movement for the development of integral consciousness, discussed further in this volume. The creative arts are also widely used to promote intrinsic motivation, encourage self-esteem and help to give meaning to the subject matter.

The contemporary research supporting the use of imagination, metaphor and visual artistic approaches to education as an adjunct to abstract intellectual methods has its historical context for Western thinking in the Platonic stream of philosophical thought that values aesthetic education. More broadly, the social, cultural and psychological context for the use of image, myth and metaphor is supported by the psychological and literary works of Carl Jung and Joseph Campbell. Essentially these writers critique the Euro-centric Cartesian<sup>viii</sup> position of the importance of solely rational modes of thinking at the expense of other forms of human expression, emphasising modes such as symbolical, contemplative, depictive and mythogenetic (Campbell, 1968).

In terms of learning theory, Harry Broudy argues for the crucial role of imagery and imagination in forming part of what he calls the *allusionary base* of learning. Here he refers to the conglomerate of concepts, images, and memories available to us to provide meaning in what we hear or read. Relating more to the connotative (aesthetic/symbolic) rather than the denotative (scientific) functional use of words, Broudy explains that this context of meaning may be richly developed through poetry, literature, mythology and the arts, and is essentially the stock of meaning with which we think and feel (Broudy, 1987). Several contemporary educationists also emphasise the significance of cultivating imagination in education (Sloan, 1983; Eisner, 1985; Neville, 1989; Egan, 1997). Could it be that the lack of meaning experienced by many Western youth today is related to an education that lacks imagination, and other non-discursive ways of knowing?

To test my intuition that Steiner educated students may have a different relationship to the future from their mainstream educated cohorts, I undertook some research on views and visions of the future with the senior secondary students of the three largest Steiner schools in Australia (Gidley, 1997). The findings suggested that the young people who had been educated within this

approach are more positive and hopeful towards the future and more empowered that they can effect change, than their mainstream educated counterparts (Hutchinson, 1992). In spite of having been exposed to similar, negative images of the future of the world expressed in their expectation of the 'probable future', they appear to have emerged from this 'hidden curriculum' with their idealism and social activism intact. Unlike many young people who have difficulty imagining a very different future (other than the standard 'techno-fix' solution to problems), the Steiner students' visions of their preferred futures were very richly developed and also strongly focused on improved social futures (Gidley, 2002). In this research it was also found that the Steiner educated students placed human agency at the centre of the change that needs to happen if we are to prevent global catastrophe. They listed qualities such as personal development, activism, changes in values (less greed, more spirituality), and future care as some of the ways that humans, including themselves, need to change (Gidley, 1998).

It is proposed here that in any given situation, at least two layers of education are occurring:

- the education provided by the school/schooling system;
- the meta-layer of education (the 'hidden curriculum') provided by the tacit messages of society/culture, in particular through the mass media, much of which provides negative, fearful images of 'the future'. These messages are of course rapidly colonising the image life of youth globally as a result of the processes of globalisation discussed in the beginning of this chapter. (Gidley, 2002)

It is suggested here that with 'mainstream educated' youth there is a consistency between the two layers of education in that the style and operation of most mainstream schooling reinforces and supports many of the tacit, negative messages of society. These messages of course are also embedded in the educational models implanted through the EFA agenda. It is further argued that this consistency between the messages of school and society may leave the students insufficient opportunity to create alternative images of the future either consciously or tacitly. This raises the question: How are mainstream schools today, in the West and their carbon copies in the 'non-West' balancing these destructive societal messages about the future for our young people?

By contrast, alternative approaches such as Steiner education provide artistic, imaginative, values-based, meaningful educational experiences and processes which provide a counter balance to the often fragmented, abstract, violent, meaningless and pessimistic messages of our culture provided through the mass media.

#### *A Personal Comment on Strengths and Weaknesses of Steiner Education*

It may appear that I have biased, overly positive views of Steiner education, however I am not without critique of how it is applied in some settings. There has been an increasing interest among some 'mainstream' educators to explore alternatives. In addition to my own research discussed above, numerous studies

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have been undertaken in the US and the UK in the last two decades to investigate the Steiner/Waldorf approach, from both 'inside' and 'outside' (Almon, 1992; Uhrmacher, 1993; McDermott et al., 1996; Armon, 1997; Easton, 1997; Glockler, 1997; Miller, 1997; Oberman, 1997; Ogletree, 1997; Uhrmacher, 1997; Woods et al., 1997; Smith, 1998; Astley & Jackson, 2000; Miller, 2000; Nicholson, 2000; Woods & Woods, 2002; Woods et al., 2005). It is beyond the scope of this paper to evaluate this research. Instead I will offer a personal comment as to its strengths and weaknesses from my experience working with this approach. It is my observation that overall the students develop a strong, intrinsic motivation for learning; a balanced repertoire of practical, artistic, and social as well as academic skills; a positive self-esteem, regardless of whether they are academically 'bright' or not; a broad cultural awareness; and a love of, and respect for, nature. As my research shows, Steiner educated students also have a sense of confidence and empowerment that they can create a more positive, equitable and just future and a sense of responsibility that humans (indeed they, themselves) are the key to the future health of society and the planet.

On the other hand, I have seen children who for whatever reason did not thrive in this approach, and I have seen teachers and even whole schools which became too narrow, dogmatic and even 'cultish' in their interpretation of Steiner's ideas. Many of the Steiner schools worldwide, even in Australia and South East Asia, continue to use primarily Euro-centric content rather than local, culture specific material, at best severely limiting the richness of educational experience, at worst contributing to cultural colonisation. In my observation many Steiner teachers, through a combination of 'over zealousness' and pedagogical arrogance, have become too out-of-touch with contemporary educational thought, thereby missing some of the pockets of positive change occurring globally which may help to keep them 'current'. Finally, some aspects of the overall 'hidden curriculum' of schooling generally, also occur in Steiner schools. In particular, these schools seem to fall prey to the institutional mentality of teachers (i.e., the school becomes their world), the hierarchical posturing and politics that can occur between individuals, and last but not least, the lack of meta-questioning about whether schools, *per se*, need to exist at all.

#### EDUCATION FOR TRANSFORMATION IN AN EMERGENT GLOBAL/ISING WORLD

The research described should not be interpreted in any way to suggest that all students ought to be attending Steiner schools, but rather to suggest that a real dialogue of pedagogies, such as that occurring in this collection, might open general education (and EFA) to additional processes that may empower students to create a wiser and more positive future world. If organisations such as the World Bank are serious about developing educational processes 'for all' that will underpin healthier outcomes for young people and for societies in general, the current emphasis on narrow literacies and 'head knowledge' would need to be balanced by 'heart and hand' processes.

If we seek to foster the conditions in which learning societies might flourish, educational processes for the future would need to be more integral, artistic, imaginative and proactive, enabling the students (of all ages) to feel more committed and empowered to create cooperative, diverse, wise futures for all.

Integrated educational processes, regardless of their cultural origins, can provide endless sources of material for life-long learning which is inclusive of all cultural and ethnic content and diverse processes of implementation. Examples include: Steiner education, neohumanist education, Montessori education and Integral education. Such an integrated 'head, heart and hands' approach is ideally suited for a much broader implementation, beyond schools, as a catalyst for a learning society. This is of course providing that tendencies, inherent in any such philosophy, towards spiritual arrogance and fundamentalism, can be overcome in human nature.

And that begins with each one of us.

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<sup>i</sup> This article is based on an earlier paper called "Education for All", or "Education for Wisdom", which was an invited chapter for the book *Unfolding Learning Societies: Deepening the Dialogues*, Vimukt Shiksha Special Issue, April 2001. I had been asked by a group of educators from Shikshantar, Udaipur, in India, to present my interpretation of how Steiner education might assist in providing an alternative to the 'factory model' of education being promoted by the World Bank's "Education for All" agenda and whether it might support the development of a 'learning society'. Other than a few editorial changes to title and subtitles, and the addition of a few research detail updates, the content and voice are largely unchanged as they are still relevant and appropriate for this topic, from my current perspective.

<sup>ii</sup> In 1990, delegates from 155 countries, as well as representatives from some 150 organisations, agreed at the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand (5–9 March 1990) to universalize primary education and massively reduce illiteracy before the end of the decade.

<sup>iii</sup> 'Positivism'—empirical scientific thinking, which arose and flourished in the West after the European Enlightenment and has since been the dominant mode of academic discourse.

<sup>iv</sup> The term 'scientific materialism' was characterised by Alfred North Whitehead as the foundational 'tradition of thought' underlying 'modernity' the civilisation that now dominates the globe (see Gare, 2002).

<sup>v</sup> The term 'instrumental rationality' was coined by Jürgen Habermas to distinguish it from what he called 'communicative rationality' as part of his theory of 'universal pragmatics' (see Habermas, 1979).

<sup>vi</sup> 'Use-by date'—this term is used to define the last date by which commodities such as food products are safe to be eaten. Its use here alludes to the commodification and packaging of knowledge and learning in the Western model as if they were products to be consumed rather than processes to be engaged in; that is, Western scientific positivism is 'no longer safe for human consumption'.

<sup>vii</sup> 'Global problematique'—is a complex, interdependent set of problems, where the existence of a particular problem is systematically bound into (and dependent on) the existence of other problems.

<sup>viii</sup> 'Cartesian'—derived from the philosophical position of Rene Descartes, "I think, therefore I am".

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