The cover design concept for this issue theme, ‘The Sustainability Prism: Exploration in sustainability and language’, is the prism. The design utilizes chroma-depth printing technologies to produce a 3D space using colours of the prism. This printing method offsets red (the longest wavelength) to the forefront and violet light (the shortest wavelength) to the background. This makes red objects appear to float in the air whilst blue and violet objects to seem to recede into the background. The chromo-stereoscopic phenomenon gives the illusion of depth when using glasses with lenses made of minute holographic prisms that are provided with this issue.

Stylistic butterflies are used to further enhance the prismatic concept. Butterfly wings are colourless, consisting of a translucent membrane covered by a layer of microscopic scales. These tiny scales produce what is termed ‘structural colours’, similarly to the way that a prism produces colour when it catches the light in a certain way: ‘Light passes through the tiny scales and is reflected multiple times, giving the butterfly wings its iridescence’ (Butterfly biology 1999).

The symbolic representation of the butterflies also references the ‘butterfly effect’, a term used in ‘chaos theory’ and attributed to mathematician, Edward Norton Lorenz, “to describe how small changes to a seemingly unrelated thing or condition can affect large, complex systems” (‘What is the butterfly effect?’ 2012). This reflects the many contributions in this issue from authors of various cultures around the globe which stem which from one source, the editor, who flapped his wings - and the result is a wave of diverse, challenging and inspirational viewpoints.

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Submissions of articles, commentaries, reviews and fictional works are subject to double blind peer review and should be emailed to the general article editor. Authors are encouraged to consider and reference papers previously published in Social Alternatives to promote ongoing discussion. Submissions should be double-spaced with page numbers on the bottom right. Academic articles should be approximately 3,000-5,000 words, commentaries and review essays between 800 to 1,500 words, book reviews 800 words, short stories 1,000 words and poetry up to 25 lines. Submissions must include:

• copyright release form
• title page listing contributing authors, contact details, affiliation and short bio of approximately 150 to 200 words
• abstract of approximately 150 to 200 words
• three - five keywords.

Please use Australian/English spelling and follow Harvard referencing. Submit tables, graphs, pictures and diagrams on separate pages. Remove in-text references identifying authors and replace with [name removed for the review process].

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This special edition began with the working title ‘Sustainable Development: Global Vision, Local Voices’. However, as it evolved and the articles came in, the focus on development fragmented and became much less about the category ‘sustainable development’ or even its ‘global vision’. The focus turned instead on social and personal learning and the conversations around these open categories. As a result the category ‘sustainability’ became a prism through which to view how people and their institutions are addressing the emergent limits to our global/globalising civilisation. In this way ‘sustainable development’ became ‘sustainable prism’ while ‘global vision and local voice’ became much less definitive. To put it another way, the issue became much more tentative and shifted to explorations in the areas of sustainability and the languages that we use to describe our strivings in this area.

The fifteen articles and one poem presented here tell a story of diversity and innovation. The thinking is grounded in the realities for which and from which the writers speak. Having a global reach, much of the work comes from speakers whose mother tongues are other than English, the result is a diversity of expression and thought that challenged me to hold space for all contributors. This has taken me on multiple journeys in which the question of the authentic representation of ideas and also the idiomatic nature of plural-English is to be honoured and celebrated.

Thoughts on Authority

I have come to see this special issue metaphorically as a caravan carrying rich spices from many corners of the world. I have felt as if I were a customs official checking the ‘baggage’. I am aware that generally customs officials are viewed with suspicion and even anxiety by travelers so I have worked at being a somewhat up-beat official who, rather than acting as gate keeper, has subverted this authoritative role and taken on the persona of the cosmopolitan official (cosmofficial) welcoming the weary travelers to this special issue. In this I have picked up on a thread offered by Benjamin Laier in his reflection on TEDxCopenhagen where we meet the wonderful activist Lars AP who dresses up as a parking inspector in Copenhagen and gives people prizes for parking well. So I have been aware of the power of the editor and inverted the role to cosmofficial. In this all encounters have been welcomed and understood as enriching the overall texture of this issue of Social Alternatives. The articles and commentaries all attest to the autobiographical quality of academic work as each speaks from the author’s place. They can be understood as stories that create patterns across and between geopolitical, cultural and temporal spaces. Each is a rhizomic extension of a personal journey towards sustainability.

Here I am thinking of Barry Lopez’s reflections on story and voice. He is a writer keenly aware of the embodied nature of voice and of the play of voices intersecting one another in delightful Deleuzian play. Thus he observes that stories:

…offer…patterns of sound and association, of event and image. Suspended as listeners and readers in these patterns, we might reimagine lives. It is through story that we embrace the great breadth of memory, that we can distinguish what is true, and that we may glimpse, at least occasionally, how to live without despair in the midst of the horror that dogs and unhinges us (1998, 13).

When stories intersect we find the spaces amplified with possibilities denied to a singular. This plural convergence generates multiplicity and the alternatives associated with these. Alternatives can be a source of hope as encounters generate hybrid forms and open ended spaces. These forms reside not just in the linguistic and textual edifices each writer generates but also in the dynamic tensions that emerge between texts. Space is where something extra-linguistic resides. In fact each encounter across languages extends us and invites us to reflect on our own voicing of the world and how we embody this voice through our values and actions. Lopez again helps us see this embodied quality for what it is:

The effect of these encounters was not a belief that I was now able to speak for such people – a notion I find dangerous as well as absurd – but an understanding that my voice … was not the only
Thoughts on Language

Such reflections bring me to Walter Benjamin for whom words were as Hannah Arendt notes, ‘thought things’ (1969, p. 48). Sustainability is one such thought thing and when we understand it as such it becomes easier to appreciate how it has such a multiplicity of meanings, associations, fragrances and shadows. Approached in this way the word is both empty and full simultaneously. Empty because it has become a weasel-word, what Illich and Sanders call ‘uniquack’ (1989), in the hands of the superficial or rapacious seeking to green wash their ill deeds; but full in its emptiness following the lead of Thich Nhat Hanh (1988) who speaks so beautifully of the fullness of emptiness:

If I am holding a cup of water and I ask you, “Is this cup empty?” you will say, “No, it is full of water.” But if I pour out the water and ask you again, you may say, “Yes, it is empty.” But empty of what? Empty means empty of something. The cup cannot be empty of nothing. “Empty” doesn’t mean anything unless you know empty of what. My cup is empty of water, but it is not empty of air. To be empty is to be empty of something. This is quite a discovery (Hahn 1988: 7).

It is this full emptiness I think Benjamin is referring to when he describes the essential inability of language to represent its object. He argues that we more easily become aware of this gap between the ‘thought thing’ and its object when translation comes into effect. In the primary tongue it is harder to perceive the basic dissonance but when we begin moving across or between tongues then the gap becomes more evident.

Words grow and mature (Benjamin, 1969, p. 73) filled with cultural and historical associations. This is why we often find an author situating their use of sustainability within a frame such as the commonly cited Brundtland report. This genealogical positioning is an attempt to anchor or tie the object/word/concept down, to lessen the gap in this case between the ‘thought thing’ and its essence. Such a move however is doomed to fail because as Benjamin argues there is a ‘suprahistorical’ dimension to a word that is not translatable but somehow free from the calcification of tongues and time (ibid: 74). For a thinker with Benjamin’s sensibilities, this quality of a word is ‘the unfathomable, the mysterious, the “poetic”’ (ibid: 70). Sustainability is such a word with multiple dimensions. It behaves rhizomically (Bussey 2009) trespassing and morphing as it crosses cultural and political borders. Sustainability is viral in that it forms relational spaces with other elements of culture that it encounters. It acts as a solvent and as an instigator simultaneously, revealing the worst and best of cultures for what they are. As an aspirational marker it indicates hope and action for a better future. It is this open and non-prescriptive use I intend here.

Thoughts on Purpose and Intent

These reflections on language rose up from the work of clarifying with authors represented in this special issue the purpose and intent behind their words. Much fun was had with that wonderful artefact Google Translate where, as Benjamin would say, the informational content of words might be captured but the intentional, ineffable quality totally lost. As he wryly notes:

A literal rendering of the syntax completely demolishes the theory of reproduction of meaning and is a direct threat to comprehensibility (ibid: 78).

Written decades before Google Translate, this prescient comment was found to be as accurate as it was, to me at least, amusing. Thus there is always:

In all languages and linguistic creations … in addition to what can be conveyed something that cannot be communicated; depending on the context in which it appears, it is something that symbolizes or something symbolized (ibid: 79).

Much of the work in this volume hinges on this attempt to grapple with meaning beyond formal text. My goal was not to homogenise the expression but to allow for a sense of the translation to be present in the turn of phrase and the idiom of each ‘translated’ author. Ananta Kumar Giri writes in a beautiful Indo-English while Åse Eliason Bjurström, Miriam Sannum and Lina Lanestrand are working creatively into English from their Swedish backgrounds. For Yeap Su Yin her English is in the Singaporean dialect as is true of Benjamin Ho. In Ho’s work we seek to capture this via the play between his use of Mandarin Chinese paralleling the English. I adopted a similar tactic with the work of Benjamin Laier who wrote in Danish and also with my Ukrainian colleagues Gennady Pervyi and Dima Kolisnyk whose work posed a real challenge to Google Translate. The limits to this clever device were finally breached by my Bengali friend Amitava Bhattacharya whose writing in Bengla refused to even communicate with Google Translate or any system available to me at my university. Ultimately I had to spend quite some time extracting and refining purpose and intent from Bhattacharya via email and intuition. Four authors, Anita
Essays and reflections in this issue of Social Alternatives in 2012 call ‘inter-being’ in which we all inter-are. The individuality in which there is no I without a you, our actions as unique social experiments. Given the social nature of the quest for sustainability is necessarily embodied by us all. This diversity and openness is an essential element to an effective understanding of sustainability and its many faces.

Thoughts on Structure

The works themselves are organised in two sections. The first section consists of six refereed articles from Giri, Sykes-Kelleher, Bjurström, Sannum, Yeap and Conway. Around these there is the chorus of work from Fulcher, Laier, Pervyi and Kolisnyk, Hayward, Ho, Giri, Pineda, Waller, Bhattacharya and Lanestrand. This structure is intended to convey the variety of approaches available to us as we explore the empty-fullness of sustainability. It also provides a sense of voice, the local and unique yet distinctly recognizable engagements of people with their life-worlds, gathered in choral unity as the chorus.

In the chorus we find rich extensions of themes arising in the lead articles concerning social action, intellectual and aesthetic engagement and spiritual quest.

Having recently led a chapter with some of the authors represented in this issue there is a sense of ongoing journey. Again the caravan emerges with the human need to pattern and story existence in search of meaning and a ‘way through’. As the title of that chapter reminds us we are all ‘Weaving Pedagogies of Possibility’ (Bussey et al. 2012). This is a collective striving which we as individuals all take up in unique and important ways. The quest for sustainability is necessarily embodied by us all as unique social experiments. Given the social nature of individuality in which there is no I without a you, our actions are bounded by the nature of what Thich Nhat Hanh (1988) calls ‘inter-being’ in which we all inter-are. The essays and reflections in this issue of Social Alternatives work this way. They resonate and together amplify their individual stories.

Thus we find Ananta Kumar Giri challenging the status quo around sustainable development and inviting us to rethink the category via a range of strategies involving transformations in self and society. His sense of embodied striving is picked up by Anita Sykes-Kelleher whose thoughts on global governance hinge on those eighteen-hundred or so people without an official voice. Her hope, and hope is so important in times of limited imagination, is for an inclusive and peaceful world in which the marginalized find dignity and relevance in a pluralized world. Bjurström further embodies this work through drama. The representation of injustice, the creating of a space for it to be captured, inverted and critiqued is the core of the Gogol Project she describes. The project itself is the expression of many voices so has a collective unity that reflects the weaving pedagogies process.

Miriam Sannum follows this theatre of life with her personal exploration of the lessons from her own rich and varied life. She takes sustainability personally and returns her learning to the social through her work on the Regional Centre of Expertise West Sweden. Her focus is on building capacity and unlocking potential through a conscious engagement with the patterns that often inhibit effective social action and the personal agency that underpins this. Yeap brings us to the world of politics and the attempt of a nation state (Singapore) to initiate a conversation around sustainable futures. Key themes in her reflection are how to ensure authentic participation and what to do with a diversity of voices. Such issues are also at the heart of Conway’s foresight work. She uses the open space of the future to explore how higher education can foster sustainable futures. For her there is an inner story that often goes unrecognized and for any authentic alternatives to emerge organizations and individuals both need to learn their way inwards. Only such inner journeys will enable us to transform. Thus we have come in these articles full circle as this is a key message that Giri explores in his call for us to rethink sustainable development.

Now turning to the Chorus section we are offered glimpses into the thought and actions of a diverse range of people seeking to understand and/or change their worlds. Jesse Fulcher sets the scene by looking at the issue of educating for peace. Benjamin Laier explores in both Danish and English TEDxCopenhagen and some of the key inspirations he garnered from this experience. Gennady Pervyi and Dima Kolisnyk, writing in both Ukraine and English, then turn their attention to the post-soviet political milieu and the implications for sustainable political futures for their region. Derek Hayward then offers insights into the concept of self sufficiency based on his many years of working towards that goal. Ben Ho offers us a bilingual exploration of the Singaporean determination to grapple with their future. In this he picks up on themes Yeap was exploring in her lead article. Ho’s piece is followed by a soulful poem from Ananta Kumar Giri who reflects on identity and function as he interrogates the port city of Hamburg.
Maria Victoria Pineda situates her involvement in the Gogol Project, described by Bjurström, within the history of theatre and drama in the Philippines. Importantly she sees it as offering a social space for participants to reflect and share. Next Terri Waller describes her adventure in learning from life. She is mindful of the greater implications of action and holds seven generations into the future in mind as she ‘sings up’ her educational space SevGen. Lina Lanestrand reminds us of the importance of mindfulness as an undervalued element in education. Her work directly links back to both Fultcher’s reflections on children and peacebuilding and also Giri’s call for self transformation. It also evokes the kind of apprehension that Bhattacharya is working with. Finally, in the showcase section, Amitava Bhattacharya tells us in his native Bengali, along with English translation, about his goals as a visual artist who challenges the cultural boundaries of his art by working across traditions.

Conclusion and Welcome

All articles in their own way pick up on the issue of verfremdung (to see the familiar in a new light) that Bjurström highlights. All articles attest to the power of the personal and the need to become other than what we are told we are by the limits, power and habit of context. The sweeping range of sustainability concerns presented in these pages are all linked to the lives of those who seek to address their chosen issues. We embody our scholarly and activist passions and when we gather together, as we have done in these pages, and by extension with you the readers, we make for an extraordinarily diverse caravan. And I, as the cosmoofficial open the door, gate or tent flap in welcome to you the reader.

References


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Marcus Bussey is a futurist, world historian and educator. He works in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of the Sunshine Coast, Queensland, Australia and is also a researcher with this university’s Sustainability Research Centre where he is involved with a number of collaborations with CSIRO on social learning, risk anticipation, adaptive capacity and climate change. He is a visiting fellow at RSIS, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore where he teaches in the Masters program within the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS). Marcus publishes widely and has co-authored a standard text in Futures Studies and co-edited two books on futures education. He lectures and researches internationally and is currently working on a range of projects involving citizen research and collaborative socio-ecological experiments with learning and social change. This work is regularly updated on his website: www.futuresevocative.com.

Watching TV in the Comfort of my Living Room

She pushes the wheelchair, he stares ahead, his face half-hidden by the breathing tube.

A Dignitas escort shows them to the room. This is not a hotel. When the patient declares himself ready, the potion is offered. Propped on pillows he is drinking in death through a pink straw, wincing at the bitter taste; fruit juice eases it down. Video tape records every breath, word, even the blink of an eyelid. To satisfy the Swiss authorities.

One last swallow. The tube is removed. Using his mouth he switches off the ventilator.

A final embrace. His wife whispers Safe journey, darling. I’ll see you sometime.

The camera turns, pans along an endless river, and comes back to stillness.

Lorraine McGuigan, Ballarat, Victoria
Rethinking Sustainable Development: Self-development, social transformations and planetary realisations

ANANTA KUMAR GIRI

Sustainable development is a concept locked in a dominant discourse which silences creative and expansive possibilities. Sustainable development is rethought in this article and presented as a multi-dimensional process of self and social transformations leading towards planetary realisations. Such realisations challenge us to understand that all of us, including non-human beings, plants and species, are children of Mother Earth. The conclusion is that sustainable development is not just a noun, it is also a verb; in fact it is a manifold verb of action, meditation and transformation of self and society.

... What is managed under the policy of sustainable development is not the path towards a more sustainable future, but rather the inability and unwillingness to become sustainable. Valérie Fournier (2008: 530).

[We must] avoid essentializing the term [sustainability] by locking it into a recipe or an absolute state. Instead it is something to be embodied, as a state of being, as an orientation to life. Marcus Bussey (2008: 140).

Harmony with nature should become a non-negotiable ethic. The rise and fall of great civilizations in the past have been related to the use and abuse of land, water and other natural resources. M.S. Swaminathan (2011: 116).

We need to balance the advances of science with the wisdom of indigeneity. We need education that encourages us to integrate the many aspects of our being. Through meditation and art, we can connect with our mother earth and reaffirm our cooperative nature, recognize the environment as part of ourselves. Planting seeds of peace, turning inward towards ourselves, we can heal ourselves and heal our planet. Sulak Sivaraksha (2009: 44).

Sustainable development is a key challenge of our times but the discourse of it is many a time locked in an existing status quo without foundational interrogation of the dominant and dominating frameworks of economy, polity, self and society. We need to rethink and interrogate such a status-quoist understanding and practice of sustainable development and realise it as a multi-dimensional process of self and social transformations leading towards planetary realisations. In this sustainable development goes beyond the prisons of both nation-state centered rationality, productivist profit maximisation and anthropocentrism and contributes towards planetary realisations. Planetary realisations challenge us to understand that all of us, including non-human beings, plants and species, are children of Mother Earth. Anthropogenic presence in the life of earth has created tremendous pressures on other life forms and matter.

We need to conduct ourselves in a responsible way so that we nurture our Mother Earth as an abode of flourishing for all of us (cf. Novacek 2011). In this context, what Kathryn Yusoff and Jennifer Gabrys write deserves our careful consideration:

... there is a concurrent geographic imaginary that gestures towards the universal and the epic, that of the Anthroposcene: The Geological Age of Humans. The framing of human activity as a geomorphologic force summons up to the imagination what might be termed, after the French philosopher Michel Serres, ‘the plates of humanity.’ The destructive nature of these ‘plates of humanity’ to other forms of life raises questions about how we imagine and understand the collective human condition, the longevity and sustainability of Homo Sapiens, and the impact of humans on nonhuman ... worlds (Yusoff and Gabrys 2011: 529).

So sustainable development involves responsibility, in fact a process of responsibilisation. Sustainable development is also not just a noun, it is also a verb; in fact it is a manifold verb of action, meditation and transformation of self and society. Our engagement with sustainable development challenges us to move towards sustainable flourishing.
Fortunately for us, in the shifting discourses of sustainable development, we have some initiatives in new thinking and movements which present us sustainable development as a transformative process. We see this in the works of movements such as the degrowth movement, transition town movements and visions and practices of scholars such as Marcus Bussey and scientists such as M.S. Swaminathan. In this essay, I present a glimpse of their work and then discuss the challenges for transformation of self and society that realizing transformative sustainable development presents for us.

**Sustainable Development as Transformative Quest**

The current discourse of sustainable development owes its origin to initiatives such as the classic Limits to Growth and the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in the 1970s (Meadows 1972). But sustainable development did not really challenge the growth paradigm of modernist development as a result of which we have witnessed the rise of a degrowth movement in vision and practice in European societies. While becoming mainstream, ‘sustainability has been washed out of its more radical questioning of economic models’ (Fournier 2008: 530). The degrowth movement challenges the growth paradigm of contemporary development and argues that unless we put a halt to economic growth we cannot realise sustainable development. ‘The de-growth movement vigorously supports the ‘post-development' critique' (Martinez-Allier 2010: 1745) and ‘socially sustainable economic de-growth is a concept that is finding its way into social ecology, human ecology and ecological economics’ (ibid). The degrowth movement has also been accompanied by the rise of transition town movements in Europe and Oceania. In transition towns and ecological villages inhabitants try to live in an ecologically sustainable way. They try to live with solar energy and other renewable sources of energy.

Alternatives emerging in degrowth and transition town movements can be read together with some other important contemporary visions and practices. Marcus Bussey in his work on sustainability presents us a layered concept of sustainability. Sustainable development here is not confined to the field of economic development only and it embraces many fields and aspirations of our lives in self and society. Bussey presents us five categories of sustainability—physical, intellectual, emotional, ethical and spiritual. He links moves towards sustainable development intimately connected with self-transformation as he writes: ‘The only response is to take sustainability personally, to begin the slow process of remembering who we are and achieving the multi-layered strands that underpin an integrated sustainability that can generate transformative educational practice’ (Bussey 2008: 144).

Adaptation is much talked about in the discourse of climate change and it has implications for our vision and practice of sustainability. But like sustainable development, adaptation is not a noun but a verb; it needs to be a meditative as well as transformative verb (Giri 2012). Bussey et al. talk about the need to develop adaptive capacity and for them, ‘Understanding adaptive capacity as the dynamic potential inherent in context can stimulate thinking about context that is free from habit and conditioning’ (Bussey et al. 2012: 387). Adaptive capacity is also a process of creative capacitation in which leadership, technology, imagination and institutions play an important role. For Bussey and his colleagues, authoritarian leadership is likely to ‘foster short-term maladaptive responses to climate change. Such leadership tends to reduce creativity and the sense of agency in its citizens, communities and institutions’ (ibid: 391).

M.S. Swaminathan is a creative leader in science and institution building who has offered us new pathways of sustainable development. It may be noted that Swaminathan was the pioneer of the green revolution in India but now he pleads for an evergreen revolution which is sustainable and makes a transformative balance between economy and ecology. He now works for preservation of biological diversity and organic agriculture. In the context of climate change, he now works for a new kind of agriculture such as rice intensification (Swaminathan and Kesavan 2012). Swaminathan argues for a new sustainability science which resonates with Bussey's outline for a new layered sustainable education. For Swaminathan, ‘Sustainability science involves both anticipatory research, as for example, in the case of meeting the challenges of climate change, as well as participatory research and knowledge management with rural and tribal communities in order to ensure that the recommended practices are socially compatible and economically feasible’ (Swaminathan 2011a: 116).

Swaminathan pleads for restoration of soil and making it fertile. He also pleads for a new climate care movement involving all the stake holders in the process. This climate care movement involves ‘gene care conservation, climate literacy, appointment of local-level Community Climate Risk Managers and promotion appropriate mitigation and adaptation measures’ (ibid: 17). From his research foundation, the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF), he adopts a community-based approach to sustainable development and creative responses to climate change. MSSRF works on community management and nurturance of mangrove forests in the coastal areas such as Pichavaram in Tamil Nadu. Here in Pichavaram, along with saving of mangrove forests he works on building schools for the children. Thus he writes: ‘I told my colleagues that saving mangrove forest without saving children for whose well-being their forest were saved made no sense’ (ibid: xi). He argues passionately...
for involving farmers in adopting creative responses to climate change:

Farmers can help build soil carbon banks and at the same time improve soil fertility through fertilizer trees. Mangrove forests are very efficient in carbon sequestration. Biogas plants can help convert methane emissions into energy for the household. Hence, a movement should be started at global, national and local levels for enabling all farmers with smallholdings and a few farm animals to develop a water-harvesting pond, plant a few fertilizer trees and establish a biogas plant in their farms. I reiterate just these three—a farm pond, some fertilizer trees and a biogas plant—will make every small farm contribute to climate change mitigation, soil health enhancement and water for a crop life-saving irrigation (ibid: 11).

In his work on sustainable development and climate change, Swaminathan pleads for a ‘do ecology’ which may also be called practical ecology in which we all practice an ecological way of doing, living and production and consumption. This practical ecology may also be realised as part of what can be called practical spirituality (Giri 2010). Practical ecology as part of practical spirituality can give us what Swaminathan calls an ecology of hope in place of current regimes of destruction and despair (see Swaminathan and Ikeda 2005). Ecology of hope calls for transformation of poverty on the one side and greed and unsustainable consumption on the other. Swaminathan also challenges us to realise biohappiness in place of conventional happiness which leads to unsustainable and uncreative lives which are helplessly bound to contemporary regimes of production and consumption. What Swaminathan writes here deserves our careful consideration:

How can we define biohappiness? I would say it is the sustainable and equitable use of biodiversity leading to the creation of more jobs and income. When the use of biodiversity leads to sustainable livelihood security, the local population develops an economic stake in conservation. It means that growth and progress must be reliable and dependable and maintained at an even and steady pace. In farming it is the production of high yields in perpetuity, without associated social and ecological harm. Sustainable development must be firmly rooted in the principles of ecology, social and gender equity, employment generation, and economic advance (Swaminathan 2011: ix).

In their different ways, both Swaminathan and Bussey plead for the cultivation of a new language and new identity for sustainable development. For example, Swaminathan points out that crops like millets and bazras are called coarse cereals. But these crops can grow in many environments and with less consumption of water. In addition, they provide us more nutrition compared to rice and wheat. For Swaminathan, we should call these not coarse cereals but nutritious cereals (ibid). Resonating with this change of language, Bussey pleads for ‘change of identity from one-dimensional productivist and consumption-trapped self to a layered self with an ecology of consciousness’ (Bussey 2008: 141).

Self-Development

From the above the discourses and practices of a transformative sustainable development, we can realise that sustainable development is linked to creative self-development. It calls for transformation of self and its mode of production, consumption and living. In my related works, I have offered a multi-dimensional conception of self-development consisting of development of all the three overlapping dimensions of self—unconscious, technopractitioner and transcendental (Giri 2006). Sustainable development calls for new imaginations and practices at the levels of all these dimensions. In sustainable development the techno-practitioner self becomes a spiritually pragmatic self trying to realise a deeper meaning of life in technology of self, society and science (cf. Giri 2010).

Self-development also calls for the cultivation of a creative self and society. This is expressed in production, consumption, institutional matrix and intersubjective relations. In place of a short-term approach to production and consumption we need to cultivate a long-term perspective. It is through creative technology of self and science that we transform our existing modes of production and consumption. Our creativity helps us overcome our bondage to the existing gods of consumption and find meaning in creative interpersonal relationships and social services. Such relationships help us overcome the tragedy and sufferings of isolated individualism and attendant narcissistic consumption. They constitute the bedrock of what Ivan Illich (1973) long ago called convivial society. Such creativity is linked to the nurturance, recovery and creation of the commons which create commons which is constituted of a plurality of communications that ‘illuminates the worlds that are generative conditions of personhood—including ecological matrices’ (Reid and Taylor 2010: 13). Furthermore, ‘The commons need to be protected and preserved not only for the humans but also for the plants and birds, and yes, even the rocks and streams’ (Cheri and Chungi 2011: 484).

One important aspect of this creativity for sustainability is a new realisation of time. In our present epoch time has been made a servant to the production of capital and profit maximisation which creates suffering in self and society.
We have become slaves of time in which we do not have any time for creative conviviality for each other and society. But for sustainable development we need a new realisation of pregnant temporality where time is not our anxiety-creating master as it is in the present systems of life but our mother. Our society and self must nurture time in such a way that we are able to be creatively with time and thus give birth to self and other in new ways. Making the link between a new temporality and sustainable education, Bussey also writes:

I try to teach across time and beyond time. I, like the French philosopher Rousseau, have thrown away my watch. [...] The only response is to take sustainability personally, to begin the slow process of remembering who we are and activating the multilayered strands that underpin an integrated sustainability that can generate transformative educational practice (2008: 143-144).

Pregnant temporality can create pregnant spatiality in which we can generate spaces of conviviality and togetherness for sustainable development. This is accompanied by a new poetics and music of sustainable self, societies, communities and cosmos. Furthermore, sustainable development also calls for a new ethics and aesthetics of self and society which may be called an aesthetic ethics of participation (Giri and cf. Quarles van Ufford 2003).

**Social Transformations**

Initiatives in multi-dimensional self-development find a resonance in appropriate social transformations for sustainable development. Linking to the earlier discussion on community and commons, Prafulla Samantara writes: ‘Sustainable development is dependent on and therefore should promote, service-based commons like food production and consumption, common school education and health. Developing physical natural commons together with reform social organisations and structure of communities is a prerequisite’ (Samantara 2011: 124).

Samantara is involved with struggles for land rights and development of commons. In many cases, there is no vocabulary to describe and therefore the language of property is imported and deployed. Even those with legitimate constitutional backing term restoration of commons as encroachment or, in the case of MST Brazil, as ‘invasions.’ These should instead be seen and named as land restoration and liberation. It is only then that the legitimacy of retrieving the commons for commonness is affirmed with the empowering knowledge of legitimacy. This is the required ‘vocabulary of commoning’ needed for the active process of returning the resources to the commons and the commons to the community of commoners (2011: 515).

M.P. Parameswaran is the founder of Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishada (KSSP) in Kerala, India. He is an inspiring example of a creative leader that Bussey would consider crucial for sustainable development (see Giri 1998). KSSP started its work in popularising science and creating a people's science movement in Kerala. It had struggled to save the Silent Valley in Kerala, a storehouse of biodiversity, which was to be destroyed by the building of a large dam in the area. KSSP had protested against this when Dr. M.S Swaminathan, whose work we have discussed briefly above, was the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture of Government of India. From within the Government Dr. Swaminathan lent crucial support to the struggle of KSSP and as a result the Government decided not to build the big dam and the Silent Valley was saved. Recently KSSP has been focusing on sustainable development and organic agriculture. Parameswaran writes about it:

A decade and half ago, the KSSP carried out an experiment: a *sangha swapna* or collective dreaming exercise. About sixty leading activists of one panchayat-Madakkathara village panchayat in Thrissur district—sat together to articulate their hopes and aspirations about the nature of their panchayat 25 years thence. At the end of the dreaming conclave they came up with a written report on their development perspective. They shared this dream with about 2000 citizens, took inputs from them and finally prepared a 25-year perspective plan. This perspective plan envisaged the following [among others: here I am presenting only some aspects of the plan which pertain to sustainable development]

1. Full utilisation of all cultivable land to yield maximum possible production in a sustainable manner.
2. Recycle all the locally generated organic waste
3. To procure all the biodegradable waste from the neighboring municipal corporation and convert it into organic manure to improve soil nutrients
4. To have complete and scientific management
of water as part of the command area of Peechi irrigation system

5. To go for large scale precision agriculture and thereby increase the efficiency of utilization of organic fertilisers and waters

6. To develop integrated animal husbandry of milk and meat animals like cow and goat; waste to food converters like pigs, poultry and fish and thus become self-sufficient in milk, meat, eggs and fish to ensure food self-sufficiency

7. To ensure opportunities for economic activities (self as well as wage employment) for all those willing to work so that livelihood related long distance travel is reduced to a minimum and so also transportation of goods of consumption

8. To set up industries to manufacture as many items of daily use as possible within the panchayat, as well as to share with neighboring panchayats items requiring large-scale production

9. To boycott all transnational, corporate products, where ever a near equivalent ‘local’ product can be produced

10. To stop consuming goods which have only vanity values or destructive values

[...]

14. To provide pedestrian walkways and cycle paths [...]

19. To reduce their [people’s] carbon footprint continuously to zero by embarking upon an ambitious programme for carbon sequestration (Parameswaran 2012: 93).

The above pathways towards sustainable development emerged out of a project of collective dreaming which reiterate the significance of new collective imagination. But this new imagination calls for transformation of existing systems of production, consumption, economy and polity. These proposals resonate with some of the earlier proposals towards sustainable life presented by Gandhi as well as the noted Gandhian economist J.C. Kumararapu who had challenged us to create an economy of permanence (see Bandhu 2011). These proposals also resonate with contemporary articulations for transformations coming from many quarters. Nadia Johanisova and Stephan Wolf argue for instance for ‘the co-operative organisation of economy and economic democracy as crucial to realising sustainable development’ (Johanisova and Wolf 2012: 564). They also challenge us to realise the need to nurture diversity of scales and plurality of production modes (ibid). They also reiterate the significance of ecological tax reform: ‘Ecological tax reform (which entails higher taxation of material and energy capital consumption and lower taxation of work) could help internalise the environmental externalities of large corporations as well as consumer behaviour’ (2012: 564).

Planetary Realisations

Sustainable development calls for a new relationship with our Mother Earth, a new mode of living with our Mother Earth. It challenges us to realise as Thomas Berry had invited us to realise the dreams of our mother Earth (Berry 1990). For Berry, all our modern knowledge systems are deployed to exploit the resources of Mother Earth for our own narrow goals rather than for nurturing and taking care of our Mother Earth. Planetary realisations challenge us to transform such an exploitative relationship and embody a relationship of responsibility and care. This calls for a new way of life or what Indian thinker Subash Sharma calls a New Earth Sastra (ibid 2012). For Sharma, a new Earth Sastra brings Higher Consciousness to the world of economics to create ‘inclusive and sustainable development’ (Sharma 2012: 10). It also challenges us to nurture our soil and soul in a creative manner so that it creates sustainable flourishing in self and society. But our soil and soul also meet in a tired and wounded sole where feet with which we walk with our Mother Earth are wounded and poisoned by the forces of unsustainable development. So we would have to heal our wounded soles, restore our soil and souls as part of a new trigonometry of regeneration of sole, soil and soul for transforming acquiescent sustainable development to a manifold art and mode of sustainable flourishing of life, self and society.

Sole Protesters

The Hindu carried a photograph under the title ‘Sole of the Nation’ on 12 September 2012 depicting the water wounded feet of the people doing satyagraha by standing under water and protesting against the rise of the height of Narmada dam in Madhya Pradesh, India.
References


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Ananta Kumar Giri strives to walk and swim in the roads and rivers of the world as a student of life. Growing up in difficult circumstances, he was touched by the wonders and wanderings of life at an early age. He has been blessed to meet many enlightening teachers in India and around the world who have affirmed his love of learning. Ananta has studied at Ravenshaw College in Cuttack (Orissa), the Delhi School of Economics, and Johns Hopkins University. He also worked with the noted socio-religious movement, Habitat for Humanity, as part of his doctoral work in Anthropology at Johns Hopkins, from which he graduated in 1994. Ananta nurtures rooted planetary conversations across many cultural, religious and epistemological boundaries, and now is editing a book on Cosmopolitanism & Beyond. Having written and edited more than two dozen books in the Odia and English languages, his quest for planetary conversations is manifest in his trilogy – Conversations & Transformations: Towards a New Ethics of Self & Society (2002), Sociology & Beyond: Windows & Horizons (2012), and Knowledge & Human Liberation: Toward Planetary Realizations (2013). Ananta has been with the Madras Institute of Development Studies in Chennai, India since 1995. In addition, he has taught and held research positions at universities in India and abroad, including the University of Kentucky (USA); Aalborg University (Denmark); the University of Freiburg and Humboldt University (Germany); and the Maison des Sciences de l’Homme, Paris (France). He is presently animated by a new trigonometry of creativity that consists of philosophy and history, travel on foot, and a new geometry of consciousness. In this configuration, the horizontal and the vertical seek a new height and depth of integration in poetry, prayer, creative transformative actions, and learning.
Transforming Global Governance for a Socially Sustainable World

ANITA SYKES-KELLEHER

In this article I discuss the need for transformation of the current global governance system in the context of attaining peace for a socially sustainable world. I propose that nations and peoples unrepresented in the current United Nations centred system might provide new thinking as to how the human family could collectively address its common global affairs. Amplification of the voices of the unrepresented is necessary for the purposes of accessing this thinking. A preferred global governance future is described reflecting the interests of the unrepresented and the need for United Nations reforms to be implemented.

‘All we are saying…….is give peace a chance’ sang the Plastic Ono Band in 1969. Yet world peace eludes the human family despite decades of social activism and peace studies. Contributing factors, I propose, include the attempts by dominant nations to control other nations by fear and by force, and the marginalisation of many of the world’s nations and peoples from forums such as the United Nations (UN) General Assembly where they might have a voice in decisions affecting their futures.

The UN General Assembly, comprising 193 of the world’s 194 States, is at the core of the current global governance system. Some might consider the UN to be the legitimate forum for the people of the world to debate and agree the management of their common affairs, as envisioned by the Commission on Global Governance, or to seek global resolutions to challenges and intractable problems. However there are weaknesses in the structure and operation of the UN that limit its ability to act. The balance of power within the UN is skewed by the power of veto held by a small number of politically and economically dominant countries. The views on globalisation and global governance held by these countries are influenced by a commitment to neoliberalism reminiscent of the Thatcher-Reagan ethos of the 1980s. Representatives of less influential nations attending UN and World Trade Organisation forums are not always in a position to stand up to the powerful States that can wield the veto to attain their own ends (Crowl 2001). Some weaker nations have been coerced or induced by more powerful actors to sign agreements and to vote on issues contrary to their people’s best interests (Crowl 2001; Kelleher 2005). In such a highly contested arena dominated by a few elite nations it is difficult for the majority of the world’s people to be heard. Individual citizens have no legitimate means of contributing to global decisions in these forums. Only States that have recognised each other through international treaties are represented at the UN and only heads of these States participate in decision-making.

A further complication in the global governance arena is that, as one distinguished scholar writes, ‘there are 2000 nations in 200’ States (Galtung 2007:153). The ‘200’ States, more accurately 193 as discussed earlier, generally comprise one dominant nation, the victors of conflicts, and a number of nations who would welcome the ability to access their human right of self-determination. China, for example, is a State that is recognised at the UN and dominates other nations and peoples such as Taiwan and Tibet. If Galtung’s estimate is taken literally, this suggests that not only are the views of some 1800 nations and peoples potentially not being heard at the UN General Assembly but of the ‘200’ States eligible to participate in this high-level decision-making forum, just a small minority with the power of veto are actually shaping the agendas on issues that affect the whole planet. These 1800 unrepresented and underrepresented nations and peoples find themselves in this situation largely as a result of being the victims of conflicts. In some of these States conflicts and atrocities are still occurring on a daily basis. From the perspective of social sustainability, it is a situation that threatens the peaceful world that I, as a Grandmother, would like future generations to inherit. It threatens the very survival of some people and cultures.

The Exclusion Zone

Exclusion from global governance arrangements is merely one example of the marginalisation of nations and peoples. As de Sousa Santos (2003) writes, the dominant nations actively produce the non-existence of the dominated and keep them excluded by five means: first, the dominant Western scientific view of knowledge discredits and excludes other ways of knowing, producing nonexistence in the form of ignorance. Second, the
dominant Western nations of the world consider linear time to be correct. People that construct time differently are considered backward ‘variously designated as the primitive or savage, closely followed by the traditional, the pre-modern, the simple, the obsolete, the underdeveloped’ (de Sousa Santos 2003:15) and may therefore be excluded as lacking credibility. Third, the classification of people that normalises differences and hierarchies enables racial and sexual classifications, for example, to be used as means of exclusion and to create dominator societies. Fourth, the high value placed on the global and the universal ensure that the local and the particular are not considered credible alternatives. Fifth, the principal criteria of commercial productivity and efficiency, applied to nature as well as human labour, ‘produces non-existence as non-productiveness ensuring that what is considered non-productive can be discarded’ (de Sousa Santos 2003:238-239; de Sousa Santos & Rodriguez-Garavito 2005). For unrepresented nations and peoples these means of exclusion are rendering them invisible to many other nations, producing further challenges to their aims of recognition and self-determination. Their exclusion from global decision-making forums is being actively produced by a global governance system developed by and for Western civilisation.

Increasingly multiple forms of globalisation are bringing nations and peoples into contact with one another with both the potential for peaceful exchanges and the potential for further conflict. Economic globalisation, for example, is eroding the States’ power from above as trans-national corporations span national borders with little accountability to the nations and peoples. People power is eroding States’ power from below in the forms of international protest marches and individual actions against unpopular and corrupt political figures; both aided by the internet which can be used to organise widespread demonstrations or simply to expose wrong-doing to the millions of people that have access to it. For one writer this attrition of the old world order has led to current world disorder (Suter 2003; my emphasis). The world order system of States that began three centuries ago following the signing of the Treaty of Westphalia, which underpins the current global governance structure, is declining and as yet there is no clear alternative to it (Chandler 2009; Falk 2002; Raskin et al. 2002; Suter 2003). Many writers share the view that a new world order is needed yet base their discussions and proposals on the assumption that the State will remain in a central role of any new global governance arrangements (Archibugi & Held 1995; Barnett & Duvall 2004; Chomsky 1997; Falk 1975, 2008; Hawkesworth 2006; Held 1995; Hettne & Oden 2002; Marchetti 2009; OECD 2001; Vayrynen 2002). For Laszlo (1978, 1997, 2006), however, the search for a new world order needs to go beyond States-based systems to explore radically different possibilities. One source of new thinking might be found in the unheard voices of the 1800 unrepresented nations and peoples.

**Amplifying the Unheard Voices**

Previous research in the field of global governance has been dominated by Western civilisational images, thinking, institutions, and perceptions of the priority issues facing the world. These include, for example, the reports of the Commission on Global Governance (1995), the edited works of Beres and Targ (1975), scholarly articles and books by Evans et al. (2005), Falk (1975, 1995, 2000; Falk & Strauss 2000), Held (1995, 2004; 2005; Held et al. 1999), Huntington’s *Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order* (2002), Korten’s *When Corporations Rule the World* (2001), and reports from The Millennium Project (1996-2011). Much of the work available in English also has a relatively short-term perspective. To date, researchers do not appear to have considered the diversity of views envisaged by the Commission on Global Governance or provided the means by which the people of the world might exercise their power to shape the longer-term future. Consequently what is missing from the global governance futures scholarship are opportunities to hear what the voiceless, the marginalised, the excluded and the victims have to say.

There are significant challenges associated with amplifying the unheard voices in hotly contested geopolitical spaces. However one organisation, the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation (UNPO), has taken up the challenge. Founded in 1991 by fifteen nations at the Peace Palace in The Hague, the UNPO is an international democratic membership-based organisation created for and by its members to address the impacts of exclusion from major international forums such as the UN General Assembly. UNPO members include indigenous nations and peoples, minorities, unrecognised nations and occupied territories. Their exclusion from such forums significantly limits their ability to participate in international debates, or to access the support of international institutions mandated to defend their rights, protect their environments and alleviate the effects of conflict. They have been forced to the periphery of the international relations system. The UNPO Presidency and Secretariat work to address these consequences of marginalisation and raise the profile of members’ suffering which includes attempted genocide, destruction of sacred sites, torture, forced disappearances, execution of peaceful demonstrators, environmental destruction by corporations, and communications embargoes (see www.unpo.org).

The challenges confronting UNPO members and their ongoing struggles for self-determination and peaceful co-existence with the recognised States add different
In the world's wealth and many are struggling to survive. Peoples, including many UNPO members, are not sharing many of the world's people. Nations and indigenous peoples are empowering themselves to participate in international negotiations to override the dominant States to interfere in domestic affairs, as discussed extensively by Falk (1975, 2000, 2002, 2008; Falk & Strauss 2000). The decolonisation commission has been reinstated and is negotiating peaceful terms of settlement between nations in conflict over twentieth century settlements. The African continent is receiving priority attention from the commission. ‘One World’s’ democratic and egalitarian decision-making processes ensure gender balance in major forums and encourage decentralisation of authority to local levels. This enables the leaders of almost 2000 nations that have accessed their right to self-determination to engage in democratic processes that use communications technologies to facilitate local, regional and planetary participation. Planetary civilisation is taking shape as more people assume the additional layer of identity of planetary citizen and the world becomes a global village.

Resourceful humans across the planet have developed their own survival strategies for local conditions and collectively have the knowledge to use the common affairs of the human family at the dawn of the twenty-first century as catalysts to take humanity to its next societal evolutionary stage. Emerging schools of thought from Indian and Islamic writers, for example, are adding depth to the global governance debate in the form of more spiritual paths to world order (Chandhoke 2002; Kapoor 2007; Sardar 1993; Sarkar 2006; Sen 2006; Shiva 2002). Eastern philosophies have provided catalysts for numerous Western studies into consciousness and explorations of the inner-self as evidenced in the works of Boldt (1999), Dreher (1996), Heider (1985), Wilber (1995, 2000, 2002, 2007). Doubtless there are perspectives in the unheard voices of 1800 unrepresented nations and peoples that would further enrich the discourse. The consideration of these perspectives has the potential to prevent future global governance arrangements from becoming merely a larger Western democracy, or a continued extension of 1980s neoliberalism with its narrow focus on politics and money. Considered from the standpoint of societal evolution, alternative views from the periphery might also yield the spark of creativity needed to ignite the fundamental civilisational shift called for by some writers in response to a growing number of global challenges.

**Another World is Possible**

Whilst some of the unrepresented nations and peoples are empowering themselves to participate in international conversations through non-violent means, scholars and activists are calling for a more ethical form of globalisation, recognising that neoliberal globalisation has not benefited many of the world’s people. Nations and indigenous peoples, including many UNPO members, are not sharing in the world’s wealth and many are struggling to survive. Yet another world is possible if we choose to create it. From the stories, interviews, workshops, presentations and non-violent actions of the UNPO I have pieced together a UNPO preferred global governance future.

In this future, global governance is a reformed UN called ‘One World’. The old UN model has been democratised with global civil society admitted to planetary decision making forums through a civil society assembly. Security Council membership has been extended, the power of veto abolished, and ‘Responsibility to Protect’ (R2P) measures have been introduced ensuring that genocide is a distant memory and that the human and cultural rights of all people are protected. Swift peacekeeping intervention is now possible in cases of genocide, ethnic cleansing, war, cultural genocide and the like, and R2P initiatives are used to uphold human rights not to increase the power of the already dominant States to interfere in domestic affairs, as discussed extensively by Falk (1975, 2000, 2002, 2008; Falk & Strauss 2000). The decolonisation commission has been reinstated and is negotiating peaceful terms of settlement between nations in conflict over twentieth century settlements. The African continent is receiving priority attention from the commission. ‘One World’s’ democratic and egalitarian decision-making processes ensure gender balance in major forums and encourage decentralisation of authority to local levels. This enables the leaders of almost 2000 nations that have accessed their right to self-determination to engage in democratic processes that use communications technologies to facilitate local, regional and planetary participation. Planetary civilisation is taking shape as more people assume the additional layer of identity of planetary citizen and the world becomes a global village.

These reforms are consistent with those called for by scholars, activists, and at the highest levels of the UN. They are consistent with China’s UN reform agenda, as reported by Wang and Rosenau (2009). This preferred global governance future, which includes representation of non-State actors in major UN decision-making forums, is also consistent with structural reforms proposed in Galtung’s (1995) three Assembly model that includes a People’s Assembly, and in Khagram’s (2006) architectures for global governance; both would rely on civil society feedback to ensure transparency, participation and accountability. Finally, the reforms that would best align with the interests of unrepresented nations and peoples are congruent with the aspirations of the former UN Secretary General Annan, current Secretary General Moon and the Commission on Global Governance.

**Implementing UN Reforms**

Moon is particularly keen to implement the R2P initiatives and reduce the risk of a repeat of the massacres in Bosnia, Kosovo or Rwanda. R2P could be utilised to alleviate
considerable suffering in many nations yet there are concerns within the UN membership that this strategy is simply a means of extending the powers of the Security Council, which privileges a small group of economically and politically powerful States. For many unrepresented nations and peoples R2P cannot come soon enough to stop the killings, torture and forced disappearances. In relation to this, and other human rights issues, the historical Westphalian principle of non-intervention within State borders is proving to be a considerable barrier to some nations accessing their human and cultural rights, and their right to self-determination. In that regard, the UN reforms would also need to include the development of new foundational principles to replace the outdated, and now dysfunctional, Westphalian model and facilitate the transition from neoliberalism to neohumanism. As Falk (2008) cautions, however, the UN has previously been unable to adapt to a changing world and seems incapable of reforming itself. It remains driven by Westphalian and neoliberal principles, privileges elite States, and decisions are taken, in the main, by men. Little headway has been made since the announcement of former Secretary General Annan more than a decade ago that the UN would need to reform to remain relevant in a changing world. Organisations such as UNPO and other international non-government organisations and movements could play a vital role in organising pressure groups, from political lobbying to flash-mobs catalysed through the Internet, insisting on reforms being implemented.

Imagine a Peaceful World

For now, the world remains divided by fault lines of conflicts, past and present, and artificially constructed geographical borders. Unstable and unsustainable, it is difficult to imagine a world where nations live in non-violent symbiosis. Nonetheless, inspired and moved by the ongoing struggles of unrepresented nations and their non-violent responses to the threats made against them, I remain hopeful for my grandchildren’s futures. As Lennon sang ‘imagine all the people, living life in peace. You may say I’m a dreamer but I’m not the only one. I hope some day you’ll join us and the world will live as one’.

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August 9

We walked the streets of the old town, the bars and restaurants, the cobbled streets choked with tourists. Tourists ourselves, we wandered with the crowds, looking for deals, looking for food. Cheap pasta, dearer fish: uncontaminated sea bass. My wife picked up her fish knife, then put it down. I looked at her, tears in her eyes. Fish, she said. Enola Gay she said, the waters off Japan so long and now again.

I watched a small boy struggling past, forcing his stroller across the cobbles, his parents behind him, laughing. Three girls, their dark hair and bright eyes. The bass was moist and finely flavoured, the pinot grigio dry and fruity. She sat there staring at her plate. I can't, she said. Always a half life, us away, the children at home.

Ron Pretty

FARMBOROUGH HEIGHTS, NSW
Trying to Make ‘Reality’ Appear Different: Working with drama in an intercultural ESD setting

ÅSE ELIASON BJURSTRÖM

This paper will firstly sketch the key features of intercultural drama and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD); secondly critically reflect on current Higher Education Institution (HEI) discourse; the broad discrepancy between preferred visions for global learning for sustainable development and the rationale of self-realisation and commodification that seems to be the prevailing paradigm of European HEIs. Then the Interculturality and Sustainability network and the Gogol project which emerged from it in 2011 are introduced. The Gogol project, as an intercultural drama project, sets out to tackle issues of economic (un)sustainability. The concept of the project is presented and questions that have emerged in the planning of the project are shared.

In April 2009 at Daimler’s general meeting, there was a heightened sense of reality. The theater group, the Rimini Protokoll had simply reconfigured the gathering into a play, by buying shares and thereby obtained access for about two hundred spectators. The moment the Chairman Manfred Bisschoff during their greetings shouted to the audience ‘This is no theater and no play!’ Daimler had lost the definition of power. Everything seemed just as staged as it is in the theater, but also as it seems - at general meetings which, through a reverse verfremdung, became a spectacle in itself: what was visible was not staged reality, but staging of reality. In fact, it requires only a slight change in regards dimension, or in this case a change of reference, in order to make reality appear different (Welzer and Leggewie 2010: 187, my translation from Swedish).

In this passage we see the theatre group The Rimini Protokoll invert the logic of a set text, namely the Annual General Meeting. They expose the roles of the key players in this grand meeting so that we can all understand that the drama we can call life is regulated by what we consider normal. It is very interesting the way the theatre group The Rimini Protokoll plays with the norms and the expectations of what is considered normal. In this scene by reconfiguring shares to theatre tickets they open up the context to a totally different possible reading while exposing the power play for what it is: a grand act.

I describe my work as a playful invitation to reflect on what we consider normal. Following Rimini Protokoll’s lead I seek to develop contexts that problematise ‘reality’ and open all involved to understanding or reading the world via a variety of possible interpretations, perspectives, stories. In this paper I will share my story, my motives and rationale for my involvement in the Gogol project, an intercultural drama project tackling issues of economic (un)sustainability. I work at University West in Sweden and since 1999 my main focus has been on horizontal transformative learning using drama within a global context. This is an interest that is not conducted without tension in higher educational institutions (HEIs). There is a broad discrepancy between the preferred visions for global learning that sets out to promote more sustainable futures (Anderberg et al 2009), and the rationale of self-realisation and commodification that seems to be the prevailing paradigm of European HEIs (Bussey, 2010; Liedmann 2011; Nussbaum 2010). This paper will firstly sketch the key features of intercultural drama and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD); secondly critically reflect on current HEI discourse; and then move on to present the Interculturality and Sustainability network that tries to find playable spaces in-between and which sets the context for the Gogol project. This project would not exist, nor would it be able to function, without this global network.

Introducing ESD in Higher Education.

Within the field of ESD, a pedagogical program promoted by the UN, there has been a call to develop a transformative learning that develops an ability, referred to as Gestaltswitch, to ‘switch back and forth between different mindsets’ (Wals 2010b: 386). Such ability fosters a learning that connects local and global perspectives and involves formal academic organisations as well as informal and non-formal agents, such as networks and
study groups (Wals 2010a). The years 2005-2014 have been declared by the United Nations as the Decade of ESD. Of particular importance has been the development of forums that tackle current and emerging planetary challenges. Such forums deal with complexity rather than content based education. Research reviews on the subject reveal that few research projects that address the global perspective in the field of ESD are implemented (Anderberg et al 2009). Therefore, practitioners are in the dark when it comes to developing strategies to implement ESD and theorists continue to build castles in the air without ground truthing them.

Due to the academic freedom and autonomy that HEIs foster they have a social responsibility and moral obligation to address sustainability challenges. Obstacles to the implementation of an ESD approach include a lack of understanding of the holistic nature of ESD as well as such barriers as vertical organisational structures and compartmentalisation. Conventional structures are counterproductive when the challenge is to move beyond existing disciplinary practices. Therefore the development and management of interdisciplinarity has been a focus of discussions within the field of ESD in regards to HEI and sustainability (Mochizuki and Fadeeva 2008).

**Introducing drama**

My working focus is with drama in education. It helps me to think about this work as a drama praxis driven by a set of principles that open up spaces to redefinition in the sense Welzer and Leggewie (2009) describe above. As with The Rimini Protokoll I am interested in investigating the possible other perspectives that are immanent to any context.

By a constant shift between the ‘as-it-is’ to the ‘as-if’ reality a change of perspective is encouraged. The ‘as-if’ reality is a reminder that things can appear different. The reconfiguration of structure along with the close interaction with the structure itself has a transformative potential and makes the artificial conditions more obvious. Thus we learn from learning to make theatre. The experience of being a figure and at the same time being the one creating the figure, leads to a potential aesthetic insight (Szatkowski 1985; Boal 1988).

As drama is based on what emerges in-between it is impossible to do drama on your own. The focus is on an interdependent group, the ensemble rather than on a single individual (Neelands 2009). By involving the body in acting, we also invite feelings. Ole Brekke, at The Copenhagen Commedia School (which is a node in the Gogol project) sees working with physical theatre as an explorative journey whereby the participants discover – or rediscover – a surrounding that is regarded as undiscovered due to our habitual patterns of everyday life. Drama is always site specific - it relates to space and place. Of course, whose place, space, story is important. The place itself is part of the play or the improvisation, and the way it interconnects and relates to you is investigated.

If anything is to occur – emerge – at all, the participants need to be assured that their actions are not going to be judged according to a prefixed standard. Such improvised learning that is open to emergence, craves a focus – a presence – in order to note the recurring issues. What often stops us from improvising is the fear of seeming mad, boring or perverted – or simply judged (Johnstone 1985). Drama researcher Anne Wessels (Wessels 2012) uses Deleuze when she discusses the problematic issue of judgment in relation to drama:

> What would it mean for teachers to suspend judgment in favor of creation? Deleuze rejects any pedagogical merits of judgment, ‘no one develops through judgment, but through combat that implies no judgment’ (Deleuze 1997: 134).

The core of drama is the focus on the emerging process and the constant transformation. The Danish drama researchers Niels Lehmann and Janek Szatkowski summarise:

> We see drama in education as a specific form of theatre that exists in a constant form of emergence. Something is transformed into something else. Participants become actors. Matters metamorphose into form. Processes are turned into products, and products are investigated to create new processes (2001: 62).

**HEI’s Anorexic Future**

Sometimes I wonder if it is at all possible to work within a HEI with global learning in a nonjudgmental environment, where we focus on the emerging qualities that are immanent, rather than a prefixed content and favour the ensemble over competiveness. If we want our students/peer-human-beings to be emotionally involved and ethically challenged in finding more sustainable stories our present policy documents are rather promoting the opposite.

For instance, the Lisbon Declaration sets out to make Europe ‘the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth, with more and better jobs, and greater social cohesion’ (cited in Bussey 2010). As a guiding document for how universities can become catalysts for sustainable futures this vision needs to be challenged. As Bussey (2010) notes, it makes no mention of the
environment, of a relevant ethically oriented values base, of a wider human context, nor of a vision reaching beyond the narrow economy and social maintenance of the status quo. The focus is totally on market share and maintaining present practices and assumptions. Martha Nussbaum (Nussbaum 2010) is also worried about this development within the HEIs rationale:

Thirsty for national profit, nations all over the world will soon be producing generations of useful machines, rather than complete citizens who can think for themselves, criticize tradition, and understanding the significance of another person’s sufferings and achievement. What are those radical changes? The humanities and the arts are being cut away. Seen by policy-makers as useless frills, at a time when nations must cut away all useless things in order to stay competitive in the global market (Nussbaum 2010: 2).

Similarly, Sven-Eric Liedmann (2011) summarises the Bologna process in one word: Employability. He is clearly skeptical of the work that is done to secure quality within HEIs in the OECD and elsewhere. When quality is measured as employability it means adapting to the current demands of the market. He sees a disjunction here between employability discourses and ranking drivers on the one hand and the broader ESD goals on the other. According to Liedmann all schools in general and the HEI in particular are currently obsessed with the measuring and judging of what he refers to as pseudoquantities. Constantly striving for a sense of control and surveillance and seeking to align with the competitiveness of the market, the HEI has developed a pronounced interest in various ranking systems, where the organisations position is based on how easy it will be for the markets to employ it’s product.

But even this vision results in league tables. Again, ministers panic for seemingly irrefutable results: Sweden falls behind! Germany is on the way down the table! East Asia advances! And again would panic justly measures that would be more drastic than sensible. Pseudo-quantities remain pseudo-quantities even when handled by the OECD (ibid: 155-156).

The Interculturality and Sustainability Network.
Working with Drama and ESD can be problematic within the existing frames of HEIs, as the interest is to find other stories contradicting the hegemonic discourse. As an old footballer I like to look for the open playable spaces, to broaden the game. Within the Interculturality and Sustainability network we have tried to look for various ways of interfering with the ‘game.’ The network functions rhizomically having many roots and multiple entrances. The roots are global in reach and the entrance points are sites which are open to a range of ‘actors’. One such site is the annual seminar conducted, since 2006 by University West, in close collaboration with various formal, non-formal and informal organisations such as: Vuxenskolan, AkHut, Sweden; Makerere University; The Budondo Intercultural Center in Uganda; The indigenous organisation Kawsay in Bolivia; the University of the Sunshine Coast, Australia; as well as nodes in Ukraine, Denmark, Canada, and India. What unites us is our dissatisfaction with current, often monocultural, stories and our collective quest for new stories regarding our shared futures.

Leonel Ceruto, from Kawsay, Bolivia captures the spirit of this work when he notes:

It is necessary to work interculturally, pluriversally and in a polycentric way, without any hegemonies, but based on reciprocal and complementary relations. This can start immediately, based on processes of community based learning to vitalise the life from each local reality and contributing globally (Bussey et al 2012: 87-88).

Bussey, Bjurström and Sannum (2011) state that the aim of the 2010 Interculturality and Sustainability seminar, subtitled Collaborative Play of the In-between, was to capture this rhizomic, pluriversal and emergent process.

The Play --- is portrayed by participants from all continents, all with a common interest and commitment to explore interculturality and sustainability. All with an expectation that somethings yet unformulated were to emerge (177).

The term rhizome, borrowed from the work of Deleuze and Guattari (1987), is vital for our understanding of this process of becoming as the ‘Rhizome is disrespectful to the structure, since the structure of life is always subordinated to the process - the need to become, grow, change’ (Bussey, Bjurström and Sannum 2011: 177) This thinking/acting rhizomically is all in search for the Other that moves away from the Same as Levinas (1996) taught us. To this end the Interculturality and Sustainability seminar is designed in line with Joseph Beuys’ logic of so called social sculptures where ‘EVERY HUMAN BEING IS AN ARTIST’ (cited in Tisdall 1974: 48). The Gogol project emerged out of this work within the network. It is motivated by a shared interest in investigating the use of arts-based intercultural learning.

The Gogol Project
The play The Government Inspector by Nikolai Gogol is about greed and corruption.
The idea to base a project on this work by Gogol emerged under a mango tree during a workshop in Budondo, Uganda, as part of the course Intercultural Entrepreneurship for Sustainable Development, a network base course with nodes in Uganda, Ukraine, Bolivia, Peru, Philippines, Ecuador, Tanzania, Australia, and India, initiated by University West, in conjunction with the non-formal study-organisation Vuxenskolan and the informal network Academy for Sustainable development, in Sweden. The topic of the discussion in Budondo was to find strategies for resistance against corruption. The Ugandan theatre director Mukisa Bernard, who was facilitating the workshop, shared his dream:

My first time to watch a production of The Government Inspector was when I went to study theater directing in Russia in 1989-1995. During the lessons on play analysis, of the many plays analyzed, I most liked The Government Inspector and I used to frequent theaters whenever the production was on. I liked the way the author created the characters and how the corrupt officials were made fun of. So I always watched the production with my country Uganda at the back of my mind. In Uganda, there were many faces of corruption represented in this play. So I developed the idea of putting up the Government Inspector in Uganda. I am gathering suitable names from within my society that when dressed in their characters will tickle one’s ribs to cause laughter. My mission will be to generate dialogue that identifies the faces of corruption and to encourage debate (Personal correspondence).

This idea has developed into an intercultural drama event with the play being adapted to various contexts, each version portraying some of the local stories of corruption that the play evokes. The design will most likely change during the process but the following is our point of departure.

- January – May 2013. Forming groups that collect local stories that relate to the Government Inspector by Gogol. This work will begin in Uganda, Tanzania, Ukraine, Bolivia, Norway, Denmark, Sweden. Other places are to join in when interested. The groups will include participation with actors, varying contexts and participants such as established theatres as well as amateurs, young activists as well as pensioners with an interest in economic sustainability and community based theatres. The local stories will be developed into a performance that will be filmed with a maximum of 15 minutes allowed per film.

- May 2013 A two-day workshop will take place in the various project localities. In each location around the globe, the 15 minute films, with the local interpretations of the play in all their variations, will be watched. Then different drama and open space workshops will follow in order to enhance the reception and to investigate questions that have appeared, all in order to stimulate the web based global discussion.

During the process of collecting stories and making the local interpretations the groups are encouraged to share the questions and ideas that emerge through the project blog. As these stages involve all sorts of institutions in many varying contexts there is a potential for trans-structural flows in between the organisations. We hope for a broad variety of previously unexpressed but immanent – unexpected - issues to emerge. In my context, Sweden, the play will be staged at University West by a group of voluntary actors including students from University West, amateur theatres gathered under the informal organisation Vuxenskolan, pensioners and youth groups. The workshop will be open to all both in- and outside the university. The drama workshops at University West will be done in collaboration with students from the social pedagogue department, the teachers department and the international program for politics and economy.

**Questions to be asked**

In relation to the Gogol Project many questions have started to pop up, questions that I hope to develop further.

- What will the local varieties of the play tell us and what (if any) shared patterns will emerge?

- Will an intercultural web based discussion be enhanced by the use of the embodied drama form? If Yes, then in what ways?

- Would the use of one mutual text perhaps be able to serve as a compass in the intercultural theatre project?

- Will the variety of stories, rooted in varying local contexts serve to counter hegemonic structures? Will it add new inputs regarding economic structures on a global level?

- As Drama means Doing, acting in relation to the imagined as-if domain, as well as Reflecting, there is a potential for critical reflexivity and agency in this process. How can that be investigated?

- Will the relational aspects of drama connect us to our environment? Both the nearby and the faraway? And finally,

- What are the ethical implications involved in the usage of such transformative tools?
I am Not in Control...

These are a few of the questions! I look upon this project as a huge vernacular action research project, where everyone has access to the material that is jointly produced, a collective and participatory form of learning. In a project like this there is no way I can be in control of the outcomes. The project is to be seen as an event, in a Deleuzian (1987) sense. The event not focusing on the degree of truth or falsity, but rather to what extent it will be ‘interesting, remarkable or important’. I will have to give up control in favor of the possible Gestaltswitch, the search for the other perspective, the *verfremdung* potential that is immanent.

This surrender to the process will be guided by the notion that things can appear different, as in not yet known: a sometimes scary business. Sharon Todd (2003), who borrows an analytical lens from Levinas and applies it to an educational setting, reminds us that we cannot escape elements like risk, uncertainty, doubt, ambivalence, and spontaneity in our concrete relationships. To learn from the Other, to search for the Other Story, is ethically important in our quest to challenge hegemonic structures, not least in our quest to challenge hegemonic structures, not least in our quest to challenge hegemonic structures, not least when it comes to the topic of economic (un)sustainability, where the current story has proven fatal. The Gogol project offers participants a chance to explore anticipatory landscapes beyond those given as ‘real’. In this lie the seeds of sustainable futures along the lines described by Jonathan Neelands (2009).

The idea that we are all social actors with the possibility of being our own artistic actors in the direction of our realities and our dramas will need to be reclaimed ... The next project, then, is to look beyond the effects of single dramas and beyond the subject and school and to ask whether over time ensemble based theatre can offer a model of a fully participatory, rather than representational, democratic community offering a fully participatory, rather than representational, theatre. A better version of the real world on an achievable scale (2009: 13).

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Footnotes
1. Verfremdung alienation, estrangement: a term used by Bertholt Brecht to see familiar things in a new light.

Author
Åse Eliason Bjurström is a drama teacher and lecturer in education at University West, Trollhättan Sweden. She is interested in an intercultural rhizomatic learning that tries to create flows in between different arenas for transformative learning for more sustainable futures. For the last twenty years she has worked with drama in intercultural network settings, mainly in East Africa and Sweden. She has co-authored a number of articles and book chapters in the area of intercultural education and work integrated learning, the most recent being ‘Weaving Pedagogies of Possibility’ in Arjen Wals and Peter Corcoran’s edited book Learning for Sustainability in Times of Accelerating Change.

At the Beat

This studded leather cock ring signifies ROUGH PLAY
‘They’re for freaks, the old, the weak,’ I always just assumed.
Again I treasure stubby callous teenage fingers grabbing sandy teenage hair at roots.

B N Oakman,
Quarry Hill, Victoria

Metro Antonio Machado

Garcia Lorca’s name graces an airport while the poet of dreams, remembered landscapes, diviner of Castile’s flinty soul, fuser of outer and inner, dignifies a metro station on Linea 7, steel rails joining Pitís to Hospital de Henares.

Machado is not the ideal poet to counsel straying travellers to ‘get back on track’.

Wayfarer, your footsteps/are the road, and nothing more./Wayfarer, there is no road,/the road is made by walking.

But five correspondencias* permit us to deviate, perhaps emerge somewhere unintended, and Don Antonio, reader of Freud, will encourage wanderers to follow their footsteps, explore subterranean darkness, descend deep beneath the teeming surfaces of Madrid.

* interchanges
Lessons and Patterns for Sustainable Development: A personal reflection

MIRIAM SANNUM

In this paper the author shares some crucial learnings from her more than twenty years of working life in the field of sustainable development (SD). These learnings are mirrored in dysfunctional patterns of thoughts, beliefs and actions contra-productive vis-à-vis SD. Patterns is a concept at the centre of this article; dysfunctional patterns that hinder or inhibit transformation and adaptive capacity, and generative/sustainable patterns that can be a way to transfer specific experiences and perspectives to a general description and understanding that can inspire new specific ideas and actions. An area where the patterns extracted from the author’s experiences are recognised is in the evolving Regional Centre of Expertise West Sweden. In this article there is also some reflection about generative patterns at the core of running this Regional Centre of Expertise especially concerning leadership. Some other concepts recurring in the paper are paradoxes, complexity and integral approach.

‘...we need to find a way of embracing paradox, transcending our differences, and becoming comfortable with discomfort’ Anthony Howard (2010: 211).

This quote catches the basis for this article, which discusses the possibility of using patterns and pattern language as a way of dealing with these challenges and for handling complexity in work with sustainable development. To do so I link personal and societal perspectives on transformative processes and open with a summary of my twenty plus years of professional work in the field of sustainable development. The article summarises key insights drawn from these ‘barefoot’ action research activities (Mattsson 2004) and links these to reflections on the kind of patterns that either enable or disable sustainability initiatives. Seeing my work as a dialogue with a range of personal and institutional contexts I have regularly felt as if I were enrolled in what Maxim Gorky called ‘My Universities’ (Gorky 1992).

Thus my goal is to reflect and learn from experiences no matter the field of life and to extract the most important learnings for my current project: the evolving Regional Centre of Expertise West Sweden (RCEWS). The Regional Centres of Expertise are a UN initiative focused on fostering local innovation and transformation, robust governance and capacity building through collaborative learning networks and research1. The experiences detailed below are actually like road signs leading me to and through the RCEWS development process. Each ‘road sign’ has been a lesson distilled from a key experience which are summarised below as sixteen lessons. As with many good lessons, the learning begins with a problem that is characterised as a dysfunctional pattern needing to be addressed. Such patterns take the form of thoughts, beliefs or actions.

This sharing of insights about what is needed for social transformation acknowledges the importance of ignorance. It is essential to recognise that ‘not to know’ is a core competence in my approach to SD. Such a claim is an example of paradox in action. This paradox is captured by Deleuze and Guattari who explain that the role of the thinker is: ‘...to write for the illiterate – to speak for the aphasic, to think for the acephalous.’ Then they ask: ‘But what does “for” mean?’ The essential ambiguity here is underscored when they continue: ‘It is not “for their benefit”, or yet “in their place”. It is “before”. It is a question of becoming. The thinker is not acephalic, aphasic, or illiterate, but becomes so’ (1994: 109). This is certainly the way I have experienced my work with SD.

Finally, I discuss working with patterns and offer some reflections and conclusions concerning balancing open space and using structured models to keep complexity, to learn and to generate transformative actions.

Growing a Regional Centre of Expertise in West Sweden

The years 2005–2014 have been declared by the UN to be the “Decade of Education for Sustainable Development”. In connection with this the UN initiated a global network of local Regional Centres of Expertise (RCE) to take the lead in these matters.

In 2011 Åse Eliason Bjurström and I started to think about the possibility of turning Västra Götaland into a
Since 2006 we have been running annual summer seminars on the overarching theme of ‘Interculturality and Sustainability’. Each seminar is a convergence of the work and interests of three quite different kinds of educational institutions that transcend the borders between the informal, the formal and the non-formal. Thus we have the informal Academy for Sustainable Development which consists of people who meet to discuss and reflect on issues but which has no formal educational function (i.e. no certificates, courses, complex bureaucracy); the formal University West; and the non-formal participatory adult study organisation SV (www.sv.se) where people gather to take study circles or courses in areas that enrich their lives and may or may not lead to utilitarian outcomes. Every year during the summer seminars, participants work around a theme like: ‘A Collaborative Playground In between’ (Bussey et al. 2010; Bussey et al. 2011), ‘Sustainable Futures’ and ‘Hubs and Nodes in a Global Rhizome’ (Bussey et al. 2012a). These seminars are examples of ‘light social sculptures’, to borrow an expression from the German artist Joseph Beuys, and often involve people from other countries over several days, but with a minimum of organisation and resources. The seminars are held across multiple sites in both rural and urban settings and include lectures, drama, music, cooking, dialogues, and activities in nature. These annual encounters have also been a great source of inspiration to become a RCE.

To be a Regional Centre of Expertise is a little like walking towards the horizon – always becoming, never reaching a final destination. As Arjen Wals explains ‘the search for a more sustainable world is marinated in uncertainty, poorly defined situations, and conflicting or at least diverging norms, values, interests, and reality contradictions’ (2010: 380). Certainly I feel as if I have been ‘marinated’ in this way. A lifetime of work in SD has rewarded me with key lessons and these have been crucial when approaching and framing the aims, processes and goals that inform our work on the RCEWS.

Lessons from my SD Interventions

The learnings and patterns presented below are distilled from sixteen ‘stories’ that are part of the patchwork of my working life. All sixteen experiences reveal ‘problems’ of a cultural or worldview nature. To deal with these problems I had to look for and explore alternative ways of framing possible alternative worldviews that would better foster sustainability. The following ‘story’ is a sample from these stories and is the snap shot that forms the basis for Learning no. 6 in the following section.

Twenty years ago I started to work as a municipal ecologist. I found it very peculiar that people took breaks and lunches only with those working in the same department. Rarely did people mix: technicians with social workers, clerks with politicians, top managers with ‘Indians’. I started a choir in order to bring people together and have some fun, and to get to know more colleagues. As I invited people I got many excuses, all varieties of the same story; ‘Oh, no I really can’t sing! My teacher in school told me to be quiet as I sang out of tune...’ I finally got 20 people to a try-out. All of them could sing – except one (we got a good laugh, a big hug and became close friends). A few months later we had a four-part choir and sang in the big hall for the others. After this it was very easy for me to initiate a cross-sector process to make an overarching environmental program for the entire municipality.

Each lesson listed here is drawn from such an experience and hinges on a dysfunctional pattern that needed to be challenged and explored but not necessarily defeated. It is important to appreciate that dysfunctional patterns are part of the tapestry of being. Their capacity to diminish individual and social action is reduced when they are recognised and not submitted to. In fact recognising them is part of the process of SD.

Lesson 1

Dysfunctional Pattern: We feel separated and alienated.

Reflection: Nature can be a space for intense presence and ontological experiences as well as a space for reflection and distancing from everyday life.

Lesson 2

Dysfunctional Pattern: We avoid dealing with things that make us anxious, angry, sad, afraid, frustrated, etc.
Reflection: Empathy can include more than humans and pets. In times of extensive un-sustainability it is not only a painful experience, but also a great energy resource for transforming emotions; not to get stuck in a chain of empathy – pain – anger, but to come back to empathy and act from that position.

Lesson 3
Dysfunctional Pattern: We do not have/take the time or make the effort to look for simple keys to transformation.

Reflection: There is the paradox of finding simplicity and beauty in very complex systems. In nature as well as in music I face amazing complexity, yet experience stillness and release.

Lesson 4
Dysfunctional Pattern: The fear of being wrong or not good enough inhibits creativity and action.

Reflection: Excellence can turn into a curse – always try to nurture playfulness, and approach serious intentions with a big portion of humour.

Lesson 5
Dysfunctional Pattern: Power and money are measures of success.

Reflection: Compartmentalisation and hierarchies can be a hotbed for corruption, especially when money is involved. Recognise the importance of transparency and provide an opportunity for employees and citizens to have an overview.

Lesson 6
Dysfunctional Pattern: Compartmentalisation and lack of a holistic approach.

Reflection: Relations between individuals can start a dynamic bridging process, transcending boundaries while acknowledging something in common.

Lesson 7
Dysfunctional Pattern: We invest huge resources, time and belief in convincing and persuading with arguments and facts in order to bring about change.

Reflection: Information or knowledge does not in itself do the work of transformation; neither in the organisation, nor in society, nor in myself.

Lesson 8
Dysfunctional Pattern: We lack the tools and habits to envision alternative or multiple futures; we have forgotten how to deep listen both to ourselves and to others.

Reflection: I contribute to the emerging future whether I do it in a directed conscious way or passively and unconsciously. I learned to deep listen; a discipline of temporarily putting aside or ‘parking’ the usual unreflected knowledge, beliefs, assumptions, judgements, etc. – to listen like an ‘empty vessel’ - open to what might emerge (Ziegler 2009). Scharmer says of deep listening (or generative listening) ‘you are no longer the same person you were when it began. You have gone through a subtle but profound change that has connected you to a deeper source of knowing, including the knowledge of your best future possible and self’ (2010: 3).

Lesson 9
Dysfunctional Pattern: There is a lack of (internal and external) trust in inherent capacity in individuals and communities as well as in society at large.

Reflection: Starting with personal visions, powerful and compelling concrete scenarios can emerge. This in turn can inspire and mobilise cooperative actions. People have a strong desire to contribute to the common good if they are invited to listen beyond their ego-spheres. Empowerment can be both a condition and a process. In the latter case ‘…a shift takes place in how they view and assess their individual and collective futures’ (Mehlmann et al. 2010: 179).

Lesson 10
Dysfunctional Pattern: i. We imagine experts have all the answers and become anxious and afraid to appear ignorant; ii. We expect simple causations in time and space.

Reflection: i. Leadership that can endure and even encourage leadership, ideas, initiatives, knowledge and actions, as well as uncertainty and turmoil, is centrally important to SD ventures; ii. Not all results are immediate or obvious. The effects may also play out in contexts I would never have foreseen.

Lesson 11
Dysfunctional Pattern: We seek to make problems manageable within known frames of reference, preferably projected ‘out there’ at arm’s length.

Reflection: This projection disempowers those seeking solutions to problems because they do not see how they are complicit in the maintenance of the problem. Furthermore, the more disempowered one gets, the more frightening the prospect of getting personally involved in seeking out-of-the-box solutions becomes. Personal empowerment, based on understanding how we maintain ‘reality’, is often required to enable us to find creative solutions and to enhance the sense of being in charge. Thus even the most senior people can feel powerless when facing a problem.

Lesson 12
Dysfunctional Pattern: i. Structures have an inherent mechanism to preserve the status quo – ‘it’s in the walls’; ii. Hierarchical structures hinder flow and reciprocity.
Reflection: i. An in-between space is a place of opportunities and influence, but also a place where one can get squeezed and marginalised; ii. It is hard to transform a hierarchical organisation from inside, unless top management is supportive. As noted above, the arts and other cultural expressions are outstanding transformational tools.

Lesson 13

Dysfunctional Pattern: We think in ‘either – or’ categories.

Reflection: I really got an insight into the potential and richness in diversity and intercultural encounters. In the interspaces new perspectives, new ideas and innovative sparks may emerge.

Lesson 14

Dysfunctional Pattern: We follow the first emotion-generated impulse.

Reflection: A powerful and scary experience showed me that emotion is the prime mover of our (re)actions regardless of ‘common sense’. I also learned that sometimes it is best just to leave a project or a workplace. It is no ‘good deed’ to sacrifice your own wellbeing, even in the name of SD.

Lesson 15

Dysfunctional Pattern: There are few opportunities to reflect the following choice: either to fit into the ruling (unsustainable) paradigm and be more or less alienated from yourself or act from your vision and become more uncomfortable in the current paradigm. We lack tools and traditions to communicate deep knowledge. ‘We are blind to the deeper dimension of leadership and transformational change’ (Scharmer 2009: 1).

Reflection: i. Systems and structures can mobilise great power to be in control (hegemonic) and avoid turmoil and questioning; ii. In order to become successful, many managers and politicians in unsustainable systems use violence to themselves and their inner voices or ethical compasses. iii. A paradox of leadership in a management or political role is to realise the importance of one’s own way of thinking and acting toward the future and at the same time strive to become unnecessary.

Lesson 16

Dysfunctional Pattern: In order to be regarded as serious and reliable we tend to lean on established institutions or create new heavy constructions. We believe that carrot and stick is needed to get something done.

Reflection: SD work that is light, mobile and undefined means there are no obligations, no musts and this is why there are a lot of exciting initiatives and activities emerging from such processes.

Pattern work

Anthony Howard points out the paradox that ‘...in order to increase our capability and level of engagement we need to go slower, and take more time for reflection and learning’ (2010: 220). I think working with patterns and pattern language can serve as a practical example of that paradox.

Together with an international network of researchers and practitioners, we used the “Dagsmeja” project (experience no. 15) as a guinea pig in what we called a ‘Pattern Laboratory’. We had all been frustrated in our sustainability work and would all agree with David Orr when he claims ‘we don’t need to reinvent the wheel. What we will need in the decades ahead is to rediscover and synthesise, as well as invent’ (2002: 5). This work is culture building in which a new sustainable culture emerges from the present unsustainable one (Plumwood 2002). We recognised that the use of ‘good practice’ examples was of limited benefit, since they were too specific and context bound. So together we tried to find a tool to share findings in a way that could be useful to others in different contexts, and we found the concept of patterns served this purpose.

Generative patterns could be described as an analogue to the first shared experience (cf Lesson 3) when I found simple elements in complex systems like DNA or musical figures that can be used endlessly in improvisations. We have primarily drawn on the work on design theory and ‘pattern language’ by the architect Christopher Alexander et al. (1977) and augmented this with action research, envisioning practices and our experiences of working with empowering processes (Ziegler 2009; Ferrucci 2004).

When extracting patterns from experiences we use a range of well-known tools and methods in workshops that oscillate between analysing and synthesising. Examples of tools and methods are; nominal group technique; why, why, why, how, how, how; deep listening and parking; Fleck’s synergy method; feedback; devil’s advocate and risk assessment. The workshops can have either a single project focus with multi stakeholder participation, or have multi-project participation. In recent years we have called these workshops ‘Learning for Change’ (L4C) since that tells more about what it is and what is the direct outcome for the participants.

Several of the patterns presented in this article are interrelated or are embraced by each other. For example ‘the fear of being wrong or not good enough inhibits creativity and action’ and ‘there is a lack of (internal and external) trust in inherent capacity; in individuals and communities as in society at large’ reinforce resistance to SD initiatives. A web of patterns constitute a ‘pattern language’, so transformation towards sustainability could be described as the construction of a new language of patterns. During these years of exploring patterns
we have come to use a template where we describe: Problematique, Context, Discussion, (Re)solutions, Old picture and New picture.

There are at least two good reasons to work with dysfunctional patterns. Firstly, they are usually easier to identify than functional patterns since you more or less get them ‘in your face’. Secondly, we actually need to unlearn what is counterproductive vis-à-vis sustainable development in order to make space for new functional patterns.

**Reflections and Conclusions**

In the RCE application we focus on gaps that generated the most anxiety when we had discussions among partners in the region. These gaps are; talk – walk; urban – rural; hegemonic – intercultural; formal – non-formal – informal; and contemporary ecological footprint – sustainable ecological footprint. These gaps reside within a deeper gap: a meta-gap that frames all the others and is the most difficult with which to grapple. This involves the deep conflict(s) between narrow short-term economic growth and planetary long-term consciousness.

Each gap is an overarching pattern that contains clusters of ‘sub-patterns’. In that sense patterns are holons; each pattern is part of a bigger pattern and at the same time contains patterns. Patterns are also usually clustered.

All the dysfunctional patterns described above are at play in the gaps identified in the RCE application. And of course many other dysfunctional patterns are to be identified in these regional gaps. Every person, organisation, business and community group in the region is invited to share experiences and explore more of the dysfunctional patterns and sub-patterns we face in our sustainability endeavours and together we will work to identify or invent generative patterns that will help transcend these blocks. Such functional or generative patterns can also be described as patterns that enhance adaptive capacity, while dysfunctional patterns inhibit or reduce the capacity to adapt both to challenges and to compelling visions.

Bussey et al. (2012b) have outlined more than thirty historical case studies to identify determinants of adaptive capacity to inspire thinking about futures and adaption to climate change challenges. They note, ‘This is not because “history repeats itself” but because it provides insight into how context, social imagination, technological ability and human problem solving interact in generalised ways that have unique outcomes’ (2012b: 386). As I interpret the determinants of adaptive capacity we could equally talk about sustainability patterns as solutions to recurring problems, expressed in a generalised way so that the outcomes will always be unique.

In order to visualise the dynamics of the system of determinants Bussey et al. place the determinants of adaptive capacity in different areas of Ken Wilber’s (2001) four-quadrant model. This model (Figure 1) represents four dimensions or perspectives; ‘I’, ‘It’, ‘We’ and ‘Its’. The ‘I’ (upper left quadrant) is the interior-individual (intentional) perspective - the person from inside in 1st person. The ‘It’ (upper right) is the exterior-individual (behavioural) - the individual being from outside in 3rd person. The ‘We’ (lower left) is the interior-collective (cultural) and ‘Its’ (lower right) is the exterior-collective (social).

This integral approach is an interesting complement to the pattern template. The four dimensions could be used as a tool for inquiry into patterns and to find sub-patterns (within the quadrants and in the dynamics in between). I would also suggest that transformation of any dysfunctional pattern requires an integral response i.e. changes in all four quadrants (‘I’, ‘We’, ‘It’ and ‘Its’). This relates for instance to the dysfunctional pattern no. 11 presented above that tells us that we usually ignore the ‘I’ dimension and focus on one or two of the quadrants ‘out there at arm’s length’.

The RCE West Sweden is a very open, learning, mainly self-organising, network structure where the leadership task is to ‘not know’ and to ‘hold the space’, which are examples of generative sustainability patterns. As Scharmer notes; ‘The key to holding space is listening; to yourself…to others…and to what emerges from the collective that you convene’ (2010: 9). At the same time a leadership task is to ask critical questions, structure generated learning, visualise outcomes and maintain the complexity. This is why pattern language and an integral approach can serve as manageable tools and enhance a complex and open-ended process.

Figure 1: Wilber’s Four-Quadrant Model

![Wilber's Four-Quadrant Model](image-url)
I am really looking forward to inviting people to join in RCEWS ‘jam sessions’ in creative and exciting premises. It is so thrilling to have no idea of what kind of ‘music’ will come out of these encounters, who will play together, on what instruments - what orchestras and choirs will emerge. I do know that I will listen carefully, record and note scripts of patterns that will generate more music until the whole region can swing.

References

Footnotes

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Miriam Sannum is an ecologist and pedagogue, currently working with non-formal adult education at Studieförbundet Vuxenskolan (SV) in the south west part of Sweden. She started working as an ecologist with environmental matters and sustainable development within a municipal organisation in 1988. She found that these issues are very complex by nature and involves inter-disciplinary and inter-cultural aspects and goes beyond. So she embarked on an exploring journey in pedagogy and leadership. For several years she worked as a consultant with process facilitation in envisioning, transformative learning, entrepreneurial leadership, empowering coaching. She has worked with thousands of people in rural areas and villages. She has also worked with hundreds of political leaders on national, regional and local levels. In 2005 she initiated the Academy for Sustainable Development – AkHUt – which invites people from different contexts to a ‘space in-between’ to deep listen, experiment, play and explore openings for innovative results to emerge. Miriam is also interested in the opportunities for deep learning for sustainable futures that encounters in and with nature can offer; how experiences of connection and revelation of paradoxes, fractals, symbols and metaphors can serve as guidance. Miriam is also affiliated with Studieförbundet Vuxenskolan Västra Götaland, Sweden.
Let’s start a conversation: Sustaining a population in Singapore

YEAP SU YIN

Recent public unhappiness at the pace of Singapore’s population growth has led to the government’s announcement of a national conversation to determine the way forward for the country. Framing the conversation within the context of demographic projections which shows the likelihood of a population decline from 2030 onwards, the government has made clear the need to develop a sustainable population strategy. The series of public conversations on issues that have a direct impact on the future of the country sees the use of a form of ‘participatory governance’ in seeking a consensus on intra and inter-generational matters. Whether this proves effective would very much depend on whether there is authentic and effective participation in these ‘conversations’ by the stakeholders involved.

Singapore’s population growth has entered a difficult phase. Recent rapid growth in population numbers has largely been as a result of the country’s liberal immigration policies. This has caused much unhappiness and criticism among the local-born populace, whose numbers are in the meantime projected to decline in coming years, by reason of three decades of below replacement level fertility rates and an increasing number of Singaporeans aged sixty-five and above. The Singapore government has put forth the need to come up with a sustainable population strategy, one that seeks to cleave through the many conflicting interests at stake and ensure an equitable balance between the needs of the current as well as future generations of Singaporeans. Seeking a consensus on this, the government has embarked on an approach that is hoped would provide for a sustainable model of population development by way of ‘participatory governance’. This paper examines what such an approach might entail through a consideration of the government’s recent decision to initiate a national conversation on this hot topic.

The paper is divided into the following sections. The first section presents a brief overview of Singapore’s demographic dilemma and highlights the growing disconnect between the aspirations of government and its people; this is followed by a brief look at the approach of maintaining sustainable population development through a model of ‘participatory governance’. The paper concludes with a case study of what is arguably such an approach through the recently announced national conversation on ‘Our Singapore’.

The Demographic Dilemma

This year, Singapore reached a demographic turning point. The country’s post-war baby boomers, those born between 1947 and 1965, have started turning sixty-five years of age. Current projections paint a picture of a population that is set to decline from 2030 onwards with total fertility rates well below replacement levels and the number of citizens over the age of sixty-five years set to triple to 900,000. They would also be supported by a smaller base of working-age citizens. The situation appears to be the beginning of an ‘an unprecedented age shift’, with not only the composition but the very nature of the Singaporean society going through dramatic changes (National Population and Talent Division March 2012).

Currently, Singapore has a population of 5.18 million (as at June 2011). This comprises 3.26 million Singaporean citizens, 0.53 million permanent residents (PRs) and 1.39 million non-residents. Of significance within these numbers presented is the fact that the level of non-residents has increased rapidly over the years, from 754,000 in 2000 to the current number of 1,394,400 in 2011, nearly double the amount from 10 years ago. The number of PRs has also doubled in size, from 287,500 in 2000 to 532,000 in 2011. This is in contrast with the number of citizens, from 2,985,000 in 2000 to 3,257,200 in 2011, a mere increase of roughly 270,000 citizens (National Population and Talent Division 2011).

One of the main reasons for the slow increase in local-born citizens is the falling fertility rates. The total fertility rates for the country has registered at below replacement levels of 2.1 since 1975 despite proactive government policies put in place to encourage more Singaporeans to have children (Jones 2012: 329-330). At the same time, the country’s economic progression has been the main driver of the substantial number of immigrants in the country. The Singapore government continues to encourage immigration through liberal policies aimed at
complimenting the local labour force and to meet the skills needed for building a knowledge-based economy. Two categories of immigrants are sought: those considered as low or medium skilled, mainly transient workers to take on jobs that are 'dirty, dangerous and difficult' and those considered highly skilled, who are encouraged to stay on a long-term basis and support the government's thrust towards a vibrant and innovative knowledge-based economy (Prime Minister’s Office 2009). It is generally accepted that the island-state, severely limited by its lack of natural resources, needs the input of a flexible and skilled workforce to maintain a competitive economic edge. As the country’s Home Affairs Minister explained in Parliament in 2008:

Overall, our flexible foreign workforce policies have enabled us to maintain a critical competitive edge over competing economies by allowing companies to expand their workforce quickly to capitalise on opportunities, at the same time creating more and better jobs for our citizens (Asiaone 2008).

All in, the government has provided strong economic rationales for the large number of immigrants working in the country. Maintaining a liberal immigration stance has frequently been linked to the country’s economic progress and there has always been a level of pragmatic acceptance of the need for immigrants among the local-born segment of the population (National Population and Talent Division March 2012).

However, public dissatisfaction with what was widely considered an untenable increase in the country’s foreign population rose, particularly in the last couple of years. The main crux of dissatisfaction appears to be premised on perceived or actual social inequalities, attributed in large part to the presence of immigrants, seen as the cause of increasing home prices, crowded public infrastructures and competition for jobs, among other things (Mahtani 2012). Much of the unhappiness also stems from the growing income inequality felt by the citizens. According to Bhaskaran et al. (2012: 2):

Income inequality in Singapore has risen significantly in the last decade. Whether measured by the Gini coefficient, or by the ratio of incomes between the top and bottom deciles, the evidence points to an incontrovertible fact: Singapore has become more unequal in the last ten years or so.

As a result of the recent unhappiness over the state of affairs, increasing incidences of social frictions such as complaints of foreigners congregating in large numbers in public areas and at the building of workers’ dormitories close to residential estates have occurred; these incidences are but one aspect of the growing unease between the local-born population and immigrants (Prime Minister’s Office 2009). These sentiments against immigrants and pro-immigration policies have also fuelled a growing disconnect between the aspirations of the government and its people (Jones 2012: 328-329), manifested through frequent comments in the press and on online forums. Most telling were the results of the country’s 2011 General Elections, which saw the ruling People’s Action Party (PAP) share of votes fall from 66.6 percent to 60.1 percent (Wong 2011). For a party in power since the country’s independence, the drop in votes was a significant indicator of the voting public’s unhappiness over the state of affairs.

Faced with the likelihood of continued dissatisfaction over pro-immigration policies and the need to manage the socio-economic consequences of a looming population decline, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong called for a national conversation in his speech to the nation in conjunction with the country’s 2012 National Day celebrations. The call to debate and deliberate ‘on Our Singapore to define what sort of country we want and how we can achieve it’ (Prime Minister’s Office 2012) has interesting parallels with current research into approaches of achieving socially sustainable development by way of a model of ‘participatory governance’. The next two sections explore this model in more detail and provide an analysis of Singapore’s attempts to draw up a future roadmap towards sustainable population growth through bottom-up public participation.

**Sustaining Development Through Social Participation**

In his paper on the legal and political frameworks of socially sustainable development and participatory governance, Papadakis (2006) traces the evolution of sustainable development from a movement aimed at integrating environmental concerns into economic policy considerations to its emergence in the social sphere as a reaction to risks felt by the rapid advancement of technological and global economic activities. At the crux of managing responses to globalisation and technological advancement through sustainable development thinking was a focus on the key areas of inter-generational equity, intra-generational equity, and public participation. While the first two elements are substantive in nature and involve the consideration of existing inequalities, the last denotes a procedure which seeks to allow disempowered and marginalised groups a voice in determining national economic or development policies.

In sum, participatory governance is seen as both a means of clarifying vague and often contrasting versions of the interests of various stakeholders as well as being a ‘vector’ through which more socially accepted versions of national policies can be implemented. As Papadakis concludes (2006: 1):

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[the] ‘mix’ of often antithetical objectives and policies may be seen as acceptable by all stakeholders affected by a specific developmental issue, policy, project etc. The specific mix of policies is therefore to be discussed by a wide range of stakeholders who attempt to promote the specific interests of their constituencies. Participatory governance is the ‘vector’ through which socially sustainable development may be put into effect.

For Singapore, the need to clarify the ‘mix’ of stakeholder interests and of locating a ‘vector’ through which to develop a sustainable population growth strategy is presently one of its biggest challenges. There are many areas of concern and various conflicting interests to be taken into account. First and foremost, the current public backlash challenges and questions the necessity of the single-minded pursuit of economic progress and in support of this, the existing liberal immigration policies. Growing income inequality and competition for resources between the local-born populace have raised issues of social and national priorities. The immigration and population debates heard so far have not only drawn on concerns over living expenses and job competition, it has also called into question issues of national identity, culture, belonging and the future aspirations of Singaporeans. Three decades of below replacement level fertility rates and a rapidly ageing population has placed greater impetus on resolving these issues.

On another front, a politically maturing population necessitates greater responsiveness, transparency and accountability from the government. The increasingly vocal discourse over immigration issues in mainstream and social media and through the ballot box in the recent elections calls for a more effective approach in engaging the population. Further, such complex issues of population decline and immigration essentially demand resolution through more non-traditional, non-linear means. The potential for a model of participatory governance in providing a way to encourage citizens to ‘partner’ the government in understanding and tackling these issues moves away from a hierarchical, top-down approach towards a more bottom-up means of sustaining a socially acceptable population growth for the island nation, both for its current generation as well as future ones to come. Implementing this ‘partnership’ is, however, easier said than done.

Singapore’s National Conversation

In his call for a national conversation to take place, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong outlined the objective of determining as a country:

>[what] we want and how we can achieve it...in this national effort, think seriously about our future, contribute your ideas, work together to make it happen (Prime Minister’s Office 2012).

In framing this broad agenda, the government appears to be moving in the direction of encouraging public participation in a matter of utmost importance for the country.

While the national conversation has been ambitiously targeted to engage thousands of Singaporeans, deciding on the future direction of the country will not be an easy task. There are many areas of relevance and as many conflicting objectives. Can the government strike an acceptable balance between national economic objectives and adequate living standards for its people? Are immigrant numbers sustainable in the face of its social impact on citizens? How would the government and the people meet the objectives of providing a home for citizens and maintaining a global city that thrives on competition in the long term? These are some of the broad areas of concern which the series of conversations would likely explore. It is vital to ensure that the outcome of this national effort becomes something more than a national group discussion or an exercise in allowing citizens to vent their frustrations. To garner public legitimacy and consensus in managing the country’s population issues, the ‘vector’ that has been settled on must ensure authentic participation and must have a substantive impact in developing frameworks for the future. Osmani (2007: 2) notes that there are few examples of genuine effective participation by the relevant stakeholders. He defines effective participation as one where all stakeholders takes part in the process and:

...are also able to influence the decisions in the sense that at the end of the decision-making process all parties feel that their views and interests have been given due consideration even if they are not always able to have their way.

This definition of effective participation is relevant here as it not only focuses on the participatory aspect but also brings forth the idea that the whole process must be perceived to have had a substantive impact.

To ensure authentic participation in the conversations, several relevant recommendations by Papadakis (2006: 22-23) should be taken into consideration. Firstly, a clear mandate as to the roles or terms of reference for participants in the exercise is needed. As mentioned above, the conversations should not be a mere exercise in conducting a national level group discussion or be made into sessions to allow citizens to vent their feelings. As such, clear mandates and terms of reference would ensure that all participants know what their roles are and would abide by it. Secondly, proper procedures should be
Eberstadt noted that low fertility rates have become the practices, and government policies. For this region, changes in working arrangements, lifestyles, business poor countries to undertake profound and far-reaching mortality rates higher, the twenty-first century would be the twentieth century saw a health explosion, pushing likely to haunt many developing countries. Hence, while Eberstadt points out, not only is population decline a huge will have to grapple with sooner rather than later. As 

While the above recommendations are procedural in nature, the steps go towards ensuring that the conversations encourage authentic participation from a wide spectrum of society. As reiterated, the necessity for public participation is vital for the government in its quest for legitimacy in tackling some of the most challenging issues that the country faces and will face in the future. The need for a national context that frames inter-and intra-generational population issues within a sustainability model is evident in the recent statement by Deputy Prime Minister Teo Chee Hean on the critical long-term need for a sustainable population strategy that would ‘maintain the vitality of Singapore, strengthen our harmonious multi-ethnic society, and enable Singaporeans to achieve their life aspirations’ (National Population and Talent Division March 2012). This requires a national narrative that positions inter and intra-generational interests at the core of a shared future, to meet long term needs while not neglecting present societal challenges (Brundtland Commission 1987:8).

Conclusion

In attempting to ponder and tease out a national response to problems that are intricately intertwined at the state and societal levels, affecting both current and future generations of Singaporeans, the government’s ‘national conversation’ may just turn out to be one of the more effective ways of answering the Prime Minister’s National Day Rally question: ‘where do we want Singapore to be 20 years from now?’ (Prime Minister’s Office 2012). It is a question that many developed countries, facing issues of population decline and unpopular immigration policies will have to grapple with sooner rather than later. As Eberstadt points out, not only is population decline a huge problem in developed countries, the same issues are also likely to haunt many developing countries. Hence, while the twentieth century saw a health explosion, pushing mortality rates higher, the twenty-first century would be one of ‘fertility implosion’, potentially forcing both rich and poor countries to undertake profound and far-reaching changes in working arrangements, lifestyles, business practices, and government policies. For this region, Eberstadt noted that low fertility rates have become the norm in much of Southeast Asia (Eberstadt 2010).

Singapore appears to be at the cusp of having to deal with such profound and far-reaching changes. It is hoped that the national conversation would provide a new approach towards contemplation of the country’s long term future amidst questions regarding the fundamental issues of national economic objectives, living standards, social inequalities, immigration, the composition of the Singapore population in years to come and what the future holds in an uncertain and often times volatile global environment. In writing the script for their country’s future, the stakeholders involved will need to achieve a national narrative that is both coherent, consensus-driven and embraces a vision that provides for intra-and inter-generational equitable needs. Authentic and effective participation among the various stakeholders is vital in this endeavour.

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Dawn Assembly

Sleep-struck, I’m standing in my careful kitchen as sights and sounds come Hitchcocking, attacking my rattled senses in a strange crowjacking.

A dawn-bred world advances like a jury of blackshirt citizens who roost in trees judging me by different gravities as flightless, wombat-like and from a cave, helpless and naked in a violent place with murder competent to judge my case.

JOHN UPTON,
BURWOOD, NSW

Betty Johnston,
GLADESVILLE, NSW
Sustainable Futures: What higher education has to offer

MAREE CONWAY

Sustainable futures do not exist and must be imagined into existence. For this to happen, a holistic perspective within organisations is needed, one which integrates individual and cultural beliefs about the future with the organisational processes in place to create that future. Spaces need to be provided both within and outside organisations for people to think systematically about the future and apply that thinking to the creation of sustainable futures for their organisations, societies and the planet. This paper applies integral theory (Wilber, 2001) to the concept of sustainable futures in the context of higher education and universities, highlighting the need to value both the tangible and intangible, and both data and imagination, if robust sustainable futures are to be created. The critical role of universities in this process of creating sustainable futures is highlighted, both for themselves and for society in general.

Higher education has much to offer sustainable futures. It would be difficult to find a university that has not integrated ‘sustainability’ in some form into its operations, in combinations of activities such as education and research programs, new ways of teaching about sustainability, incorporating sustainability in graduate attributes, corporate social responsibility action like triple bottom line reporting, and green initiatives to reduce environmental impacts. In this sense, the action higher education is taking is helping society to develop in a sustainable way, and in a way that is assumed to be contributing to the creation of sustainable futures.

The creation of sustainable futures, however, necessarily has a different starting point – the future. Without starting in the future, our ideas about what constitutes a sustainable future are based on today’s assumptions and beliefs about what is possible and appropriate. The future is a largely unknown and uncertain space, and it cannot be assumed that today’s understandings about what a sustainable future ‘is’ will actually ensure that the future is sustainable.

A sustainable future also does not exist. It needs to be imagined into existence. That mental capacity to imagine possible futures is an innate skill called foresight, which needs to be surfaced and developed before sustainable futures can be created. In an organisational sense, the development of an individual foresight capacity precedes the emergence of a critical mass of foresight literate individuals. When critical mass is reached, an organisational foresight capacity emerges that allows sustainable futures to be created (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: The emergence of organisational and social foresight (based on Slaughter 2006: 4)

Figure 1 also shows that beyond organisational foresight lies the emergence of social foresight, but this space is not the focus of this paper. The key element is that the starting point in being able to create any sustainable future is a shift in an individual’s consciousness about their stance to the future – that is, individuals accepting their responsibility for future generations (Tough 1991).

To create sustainable futures requires us to move beyond the linear future we often unconsciously assume will emerge over time. Because we assume that future, we never question it, and those unquestioned assumptions inform today’s decision making. What higher education has to offer sustainable futures will be very different to what it offers today, because higher education as a sector, and universities as an organisational type, will be different in the future. Universities will need to consider their own sustainable futures as well as how their work will contribute to the creation of broader sustainable futures – and the former needs to occur first.
The focus of this paper is on exploring how higher education and universities can move into a new operating and thinking space that has the potential to enhance the creation of sustainable futures for the industry, as well as the broader society in which it operates. An integral framework (Wilber 2001) is used to understand how sustainable futures are created – or not – in universities and other organisations today. That framework will then be used to analyse the outcomes of a recent Twitter chat on the future of higher education to demonstrate the value of this medium for providing a global space for attracting ‘social energy and collective imagination’. The final part of the paper will use the transformational change approach of Dunphy, Griffiths and Benn (2003) as a way to link global activity to local action around sustainable futures.

Approaching Sustainable Futures

Both universities and the planet are facing significant survival challenges today, and both exist in a holonic or nested relationship (Koestler 1967) - the future sustainability of universities depends ultimately on the future sustainability of the planet, while the actions a university takes as a system influences and shapes the latter. In the same way, the individual values and beliefs of people working in universities shape the way in which those organisations develop and vice-versa. The interrelationship among individuals, the university and the society in which the university exists needs to be recognised in any discussion about sustainable futures, as individual change will be needed for change in an organisation and in society to be possible.

Integral theory (Wilber 2001; Slaughter 2004) provides a framework for understanding this interrelationship. Integral theory is based on the integration of alternative ways of understanding social issues and phenomenon, not in an assimilative sense, but in the sense of accepting that every way of knowing has value. Integral theory is often referred to as ‘AQAL’, shorthand for ‘all quadrants, all levels’. Quadrants are developmental domains which interact to provide four spaces: interior/individual (individual consciousness), exterior/individual (behaviour), interior/collective (culture) and exterior/collective (social systems) (Cacioppe & Edwards 2005: 232) as shown in Figure 2.

Levels are the other core integral component and reflect different levels of development, both real and potential, in each of the quadrants. For organisations, these levels refer to ‘the increasing capacity that all organisations possess for integration, systemic thinking and cultural complexity’ (Cacioppe & Edwards 2005: 233) across the quadrant domains. An integral approach says that to understand any reality, a holistic approach, which integrates and values ways of knowing in all four quadrants is the first step.

Figure 2: Integral four quadrant model (based on Wilber 2001)

The Upper Left (UL) quadrant is the intentional, subjective realm, the region of individual consciousness, thoughts, values, motivations, ideas and images. The only person who can ‘know’ this realm is the individual. The Lower Left (LL) quadrant is the cultural, intersubjective realm, where only the group can provide interpretation and meaning. The Upper Right (UR) quadrant is the objective realm of individual and organisational behaviour, that which can be observed and measured. The Lower Right (LR) quadrant is the inter-objective social realm, the world external to the individual or the organisation. The quadrants intersect and collide with each other and provide different perspectives on the topic being explored.

In this discussion, the focus is on the four quadrants rather than developmental levels. Cacioppe and Edwards call this approach to integral as ‘integral general’ or ‘integral G’: ‘Integral as a general and holistic perspective which provides an inclusive view of organisational life but lacks a development understanding of change’ (2005: 235). Discussing how developmental change in the quadrants might occur is beyond the scope of this discussion, which aims to demonstrate the need to consider both interior and exterior quadrants in the creation of robust sustainable futures.

An integral mapping of universities and sustainable futures identifies the following issues to be explored.

**Upper Left**: individual views about sustainable futures, underpinned by assumptions and beliefs about the future in general. This is the space where acceptance of responsibility for future generations emerges. Sustainable futures are value laden and this space is critical to understand for successful sustainable futures to emerge.

**Lower Left**: the shared meaning of university culture and the ways of doing things today. Notwithstanding that it is unlikely that there is a single university culture, this
space provides the rules of the game for people working in these organisations, and this includes whether or not thinking about the future is supported in decision making about future strategy.

**Upper Right:** organisational processes that allow individuals to come together to consider sustainable futures; this is also the realm of, for example, current higher education programs in sustainable development where students ‘learn’ about sustainable development, research programs and corporate social responsibility efforts.

**Lower Right:** the drivers of change that shape and influence the university; these are global drivers of change such as the evolution of capitalism, information and communications technology, and the rise of the idea of sustainable development.

In many organisations today, there is much activity in the right hand quadrants, but less in the left hand quadrants. This is not surprising because the spaces on the right are visible, observable and measurable, and provide data that is considered objective. The spaces on the left are intangible and are subjective – individuals and groups have to be engaged to provide information about their views. In an environment where evidence based decision-making is preferred, understanding individual and cultural perspectives on any topic will generally be a low priority.

Sustainable futures created in right hand quadrants only and which ignore the individual and collective assumptions of the left hand quadrants, however, will ultimately decrease in value. This is because right hand quadrant futures are based largely on interpretation of data at a given point in time, and the pace of change means that this data will lose its value for decision making in a very short time.

**Global Voices – Surfacing Left and Right Hand Quadrants**

Twitter chats are hour-long spaces for connecting and sharing ideas. They provide a global and multilateral forum for sharing diverse perspectives on a topic and are, in many ways rhizomic in nature (Cormier 2008). There is no pre-determined form to the narrative that emerges. The content is created in real time and every participant has a voice. A transcript gives the impression of being a linear process, but the ideas flow simultaneously, suggesting chaos. The technology is still alien to many, the speed of the conversation beyond most of us, and not finished – it often continues for days after the chat is over. The experience of being in a space with people from a diverse range of backgrounds, countries, employment and beliefs, however, is almost always a positive one, but often a new sense-making mode is required to identify value for an individual.

That new sense-making mode is anchored in the UL quadrant, and calls for the ability to deal with often divergent thinking about the topic being discussed, akin to integrative thinking (Martin 2009). It requires participants to unlearn or let go of assumptions about not only the topic being discussed, but also about how ‘conversations’ take place, and how value is derived from those conversations. The chats appear to be chaotic conversations, but can hold deep insights about a topic, and expose participant’s diverse and challenging ideas about what is possible.

The Association of Professional Futurists runs a monthly twitter #futrchat on ‘the future of...’ A recent chat was on the future of higher education with 68 contributors and 668 tweets; a transcript is available at http://beta.hashtracking.com/ht-pro-rpt/cjeffers-futrchat-2012-06-21/.

An analysis of the transcript revealed that the chat was predominantly all about the UR quadrant – how we do things in our work as students and academics come together in the learning space. This was a result of the questions asked which focused on the drivers of change in education that are having an impact on students, the learning process (online and social media) and the work of academics. There were around 640 comments in this space, too many to detail in this paper; the themes emerging were around the tension between face-to-face and online education, the rise of open publishing and gaming in learning.

Dispersed among these right hand quadrant comments were a smaller number of responses focused on left hand quadrants, and these are provided below.

**Referencing Upper Left – individual consciousness (relating to how students approach learning)**

*The personal, social and emotional connection can’t easily be replicated through online learning strategies. But...online can capture emotional connection thru ’social presence strategies’* ...

…more virtual reality could help that lack of touch, smell, micro emotional translation ...

… relies more on the individual + their motivation to make intense learning happen

*Instructors who try to involve students in the learning process often face a serious backlash. Involvement = more thinking.*

*Recent study said HS students couldn’t answer why or how questions. Only fill in blank and multichoice.*

*Real learning is not something added, it is a reorganisation of the system – Joanna Macy.*

*But just ‘following’ a social media stream is not enough.*
and images about a sustainable future.

Developing performance measures might influence ideas as much time for thinking about the future as it did on though, how a strategy development process that allowed following a formulaic approach (Conway 2005). Consider organisational strategy processes today, which tend to these suggested approaches are commonplace in futures and/or solutions to today's problems. Few of issues as an individual to identify ways to create new focused on the need to spend time thinking about the future. The UL responses relating to thinking about the future will continue to depend on the degree to which students and academics worked together to enable UL quadrant development in students.

This is a very small sample, but provides some points of note. The UL responses relating to how students engage with education suggest two things. One, that the connection between student and academic is viewed as something that must continue into the future, although this may be in new forms, and two, that the ability of students to 'participate, reflect and create' and to 'reorganise their systems' appears to be constrained in the current education system, highlighting a much discussed topic today around emerging education futures beyond the current industrial model. Participants were suggesting that the quality of learning in the future will continue to depend on the degree to which students and academics worked together to enable UL quadrant development in students.

The UL responses relating to thinking about the future focused on the need to spend time thinking about the issues as an individual to identify ways to create new futures and/or solutions to today's problems. Few of these suggested approaches are commonplace in organisational strategy processes today, which tend to follow a formulaic approach (Conway 2005). Consider though, how a strategy development process that allowed as much time for thinking about the future as it did on developing performance measures might influence ideas and images about a sustainable future.

The LL responses related to academics and their work, and described issues that participants believed needed to be rethought - tenure, open publishing and the idea of the academy. These and similar issues have the potential to change some of the very core assumptions underpinning how universities work today, but these are the very assumptions that often go unchallenged when strategy designed to ensure a sustainable future is developed.

None of the themes that emerged in the Twitter chat are surprising. What is notable is that no one questioned the assumption that universities will continue to exist in the future. The current university form may continue, but equally, it may not, particularly given the increasing strength of new forms of content creation, transmission and sharing, and new expectations about technology use. These trends and the impact they have on university work live in right hand quadrants and are already clashing with the deeply held assumptions about what a university is and what it does. A sustainable future for universities will depend on whether or not people are ready to integrate the left hand quadrants into right hand quadrant discussions to resolve those clashes. Perhaps it was assumed that all the Twitter chat participants shared the same view about the need for today's education model to be changed for the future - but it is the absence of testing assumptions that is a flaw in most current organisational conversations about the future.

Local Voices – Integrating Left Hand Quadrants

A global Twitter chat is innately valuable because it is a space for global ideas about the future, but it is disconnected from the local and the practical. It depends on participants to make connections with the ideas and to take those ideas back to their local context. As indicated above, right hand quadrant strategy processes to build sustainable futures do not often include processes to integrate the ideas and beliefs about the future that exist in staff minds. Since it is my premise that for sustainable futures to emerge, those processes will need to integrate both right and left hand quadrants, an UR organisational process will be needed to allow individuals to come together to link ideas about the future found in a global space like a Twitter chat with local action in an organisation.

Dunphy, Griffiths and Benn (2003:17) propose a staged, 'wave' model for introducing sustainability in organisations that provides a potential way to link global conversation with local action (Figure 3). The model integrates human, cultural (left hand quadrants) and ecological and organisational factors (right hand quadrants), with the final developmental wave producing a sustaining corporation that is 'an integral self-renewing element of the whole society and in its ecological context'. In this final phase, the corporation has 'strongly internalized the ideology of
working for a sustainable world’ (2003: 16). In integral terms, the waves of development represent development lines in the UR quadrant.

Because the model is holistic, Dunphy, Griffiths and Benn (2003: 266) spent time on how to engage people in building a sustainable corporation. They acknowledge that everyone in an organisation will have a different experience of the organisation – ‘constructs…subjective realities, images that have been forged from individual and collective experience over time’ (2003: 266). Moving an organisation towards corporate sustainability – and by inference to a sustainable future – therefore involves a series of activities that deal with right hand quadrant issues such as compliance, as well as facilitating engagement with the left hand quadrants. These activities include:

- gathering information about these experiences and identifying core cultural values and ‘the entrenched behavioural mores that control much of day-to-day behaviour in the organization’ (2003: 268)

- unleashing the imagination of organizational members and stakeholders so that they can collaborate in creating a vision that breaks out of existing cultural assumptions…outsiders [will be needed to] challenge existing assumptions about the current organizational platen and accepted best practice (2003: 272)

- changing the way people think which ‘depends ultimately on emotional contagion across the living networks of human relationships that make up an organization’, and

- understanding that ‘leadership is the creation of new realities’ that ‘requires the rawest kind of courage’ (2003:293). It involves the development of a range of personal capacities including cosmocentric consciousness which ‘frees us from the clutter of objects and possessions so that the universal consciousness that flows through the entire universe also flows through us’ (2003: 299).

The latter point, in particular, is UL in nature and represents the development of consciousness that takes place in this space. Even with such processes in place, however, Dunphy, Griffiths and Benn make the critical point that ‘we cannot make people change; we can only provide opportunities for them to change’ (2003: 275). Here they are referring to changing the way people think about sustainable futures and the need to ensure those futures are ones where people can see themselves and their grandchildren – this, in other words, is the need to ensure people accept their responsibility for future generations. Dunphy, Griffiths and Benn recognise that change in the right hand quadrants is only possible if the left hand quadrants are engaged - this is an example of UR processes providing opportunities to engage with the individual in the UL quadrant.

**Concluding Comments**

Just as individuals need to surface their assumptions about the future, so do higher education institutions. The LR drivers of change will continue to shape how the university does its work, but it is debatable whether or not that change has been reflected in the domains of individual consciousness and culture. People working in universities describe a dissonance between individual and cultural values and beliefs and how university work is done that is a result of the right and left hand quadrant disconnect (see for example Winter 2009) – it is this disconnect that can undermine sustainable futures.

So what can higher education offer sustainable futures? If universities can move towards a more integral stance towards the future, and integrate right and left hand quadrants into all their activities, then there is a very real opportunity to demonstrate how to build sustainable futures that can be replicated across other organisations and organisations. This would allow universities to inculcate in graduates the ‘social energy and collective imagination’ needed for sustainable futures to emerge at all levels – individual, organisational, societal and planetary. Perhaps most importantly, universities can lead the development of decision-making processes that truly take human values and beliefs into account by integrating the left hand quadrants into the design and execution of their work.

Every decision we make in organisations and in our local context today is a micro-decision that ultimately coalesces to create and/or shape organisational, societal and global futures. For those futures to be sustainable, a deep understanding about what is happening in both the left hand and right hand quadrants – the interior and exterior worlds of organisations – is needed. We do largely understand the right hand quadrants today, which are the worlds of change and organisational behaviour, but
we do not understand to the same depth individual and cultural stances towards the future. Yet it is these left hand quadrant stances that will underpin just how sustainable any future we imagine will be. Higher education has a lot to offer sustainable futures, starting with its own back yard.

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CommenTary – Chorus


Jesse Fulcher

Children are the future. This widely accepted and lyrical conceptualisation of children is often used as a positive call for the nurturing of children to raise a smarter, kinder, wiser and more effective generation. Children are touted as a realm of possibilities, a realm where we can create important and beautiful change. However, in sharp contrast, children can also be seen as a threat to the extent that they are, or are perceived to be, the vehicle for continuation of groups and identities considered to be negative, or of a continuation of troubles that do not end with the current adult generation/s. These two contested views of children are often found simultaneously in conflict and post-conflict environments where opposing groups see children alternately as threats or as a symbol of hope.

Children characterised as either threat or hope become victims of adult conflict and are engulfed in the same struggle as their parents. A key problem is that children are educated by their circumstances. Those who have experienced conflict have inevitably been educated by conflict. Conflict teaches children how to respond to aggression, violence, intimidation and so on. More importantly in terms of ongoing responses, conflict teaches children how to respond to power. Broadly speaking children become victims of their own perceived power (e.g. child soldiers) or they become bystander victims. There are, of course, significant variances within these very broad categories.

The education of children through conflict is further problematised by a lack of competing peaceful education and experiences. When war occurs children are frequently denied formal schooling and are faced with the destruction of family and of a community that should have provided experiences with a wide range of educational opportunities. As a result, children lack the chance to learn and gain experiences that will challenge their knowledge of violence and war.

Current methods of peacebuilding do not accept children as legitimate participants. This compounds the problem, for children having been educated by conflict are denied the chance to be educated in peacebuilding. As a result of the exclusion of children from the peacebuilding
process, peace is presented to children as a product rather than a process. In the same way that children are excluded from war-making decisions they are excluded from peacebuilding decisions. Essentially, peace is presented to children along with the trappings of peace, such as education and health care, as a complete product. These initiatives and others routinely established as part of the peacebuilding process are important aspects of peacebuilding. There is a push to include adult members at a community level in the peacebuilding. However children are almost always isolated from the processes which contribute to peace, including negotiation, decisions regarding resource allocation, and ongoing reconciliation events. The question we must ask is: How can we create and maintain environments in which children learn from peace rather than exclusively from war.

I propose the use of peace education. Peace education can serve to support and protect children in the process of peacebuilding by teaching skills and concepts which children can draw upon when faced with new conflict or when dealing with the aftermath of past conflict. Drawing on the work of Lederach, Ramsbotham et al identify four key areas to be addressed by peace builders: political stabilisation, physical safety, economic growth and psychological healing (Ramsbotham et al 2005:216). Peace education intersects with these areas through its attention to reflection, representation and capacity building. Though peace education is very broad in scope and can be adapted and applied where necessary, some key initiatives with wide application include:

- Discussion and reflection in relation to the children's own roles in conflict;
- Children's meeting groups and delegations in relation to current topics before government or local leader bodies;
- Community building projects that both allow for and encourage children and adults working together.

Peace education, Monez argues, seeks to help students "design strategies of action which can contribute to the shaping of a world characterised by social justice and absence of exploitation" (1973:18). The application of peace education is varied and includes both broader conceptualising of peace and world developments as well as specific skill sets that can help the individual communicate views and perspectives within personal conflicts. These skills can include but are not limited to: listening, cooperation, problem solving, and reflecting (Morrison 2003) - skills which help to develop the individual's ability to handle conflict and conceptualise greater change.

The initiatives and skills identified above need to be available to all children regardless of whether they are in a position to attend formal schooling. However the establishment or re-institution of formal schooling is one of the earliest products of peace commonly presented to children. Schools are able to work towards the regeneration of society through careful planning of classroom structure and a curriculum that focuses on inclusive history and multi-cultural learning opportunities and goals (Bush and Saltarelli 2000). One example of this type of schooling is the 'Children Teaching Children' program, which operates as part of the official curriculum in pairs of neighbouring Arab and Jewish schools throughout Israel. This program seeks to, and has been successful in, helping children to identify themselves and each other within their nationalities. This in turn helps the children to both deal with current and ongoing conflict and to have tools and understandings to work towards more harmonious relationships (Ozacky-Lazar 2002).

However, classroom structure and curriculum can also be employed in ways that are destructive of peace. For example, in some Sri Lankan schools with playgrounds sponsored by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil, the playgrounds have been outfitted with wooden guns mounted on see-saws, with the aim of normalising violence (Brocklehurst 2006). This obvious exploitation is in opposition to peace education as defined above.

Peace education hinges on the participant's view of peace, and their wants and needs, with the aim of creating a society more in keeping with those views (Bar-Tal 2002). This means that the results of peace education will be different in different circumstances. However the underlying goals of increasing personal skills and confidence remain. Schooling, as traditionally defined and disseminated, is driven by measurable results, usually based on testing. This leaves little room for the child to develop and give voice to their own view of peace.

There is a wide and growing concern over the ability of peace education to be effectively applied in traditional classroom settings. This stems from the view that traditional classrooms are intrinsically violent in that the rights of the student to self expression and discovery are subjugated to the rights of the governing body or teacher (Msila 2011; Neill 1964). While there are many traditional schools which offer courses in peace education the definition of peace is often determined by curriculum rather than by consultation (Lantieri and Patti 1996), in much the same way that the playground equipment is controlled by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil – albeit generally much more benevolently.

Establishing a culture of peace that is collaborative, adaptable and ongoing requires a move away from
traditional schooling to progressive schooling, the hallmarks of which are freedom of self-expression and discovery. Although there would certainly be no guns on see-saws in a progressive classroom, the classroom need not appear dramatically different to a traditional classroom. However, in a progressive classroom the applicability of peace education rests with the student in cooperation with the adult leaders rather than resting solely with the teacher or adult board. This is important for children as it allows them to create their own perspective on peace. If peacebuilders allow and encourage children to communicate and develop their personal views on peace, those views and the skills, nurtured simultaneously, can then be applied to the peacebuilding process.

Further, by establishing non-traditional learning spaces to educate for peace, peace can become more of a process and less of a product for children. Non-traditional learning spaces could include schools operating progressively, but may also include work spaces, community forums and tribal meeting spaces.

Peace education seeks to provide a support mechanism for students, be they adult or child. It is neither designed nor directed exclusively towards children. However, it does offer a pathway for children to participate in the process of establishing peace whether in a post conflict environment or not. For children who have experienced conflict and have been educated by war, the need for an alternative to war in their lives is glaring. Peace education allows for a child who has experienced significant, negative, personal power to become powerful in the peacebuilding process and at the same time allows for a child who has experienced significant oppression to become powerful in a new, more positive way.

References


Author
Jesse Fulcher has recently completed her honours thesis in International Relations titled ‘Let the Children Rise’ which examines the potential application of peace education principles in post conflict environments. In 2011 she presented a paper titled ‘Non-violent Responses and Mormon Attitudes: Reasons and Realities’ at a conference held at Claremont Graduate University in California. Jesse completed her undergraduate degree with an extended major in Peace and Conflict Studies and a major in Ancient History at the University of Queensland. Her primary school education was at Pine Community School, an independent democratic school, where she now works.

COMMENTARY – CHORUS
Kan du ændre verden på 18 minutter? - Et inspirerende møde med ‘TEDxcopenhagen’

Can You Change the World in 18 Minutes?: An inspiring meeting with ‘TEDxCopenhagen’

Benjamin Laier

Der er ingen facilitiste, ingen logo, ingen præsident, ingen regler at adlyde, men kun et meget taltalende sæt af værdier i harmoni med den globale tidsånd om dramatisk at ændre dansk gastronomi ... det nye nordiske køkken er ikke bare en søgen efter klinisk kulinariske oplevelser, men et forsøg på at komme med løsninger på nogle af de største udfordringer i vores tid. (Claus Meyer, TEDxcopenhagen, 2012)

There is no rulebook, no logo, no president, no rules to obey, but only a very appealing set of
values in harmony with the global zeitgeist of dramatically changing the Danish gastronomy... the new Nordic cuisine is not just a search for clinical culinary experiences, but an attempt to come up with solutions to some of the greatest challenges of our time. (Claus Meyer, TEDxCopenhagen, 2012)

Så mange forskellige bevægelser har deres rødder i det samme mål, og det er frihed. (Risenga Manghezi, TEDxCopenhagen, 2012)

So many different movements have their roots in the same goal, and that is freedom. (Risenga Manghezi, TEDxCopenhagen, 2012)


TED is the name of a series of global conferences with the slogan ‘ideas worth spreading’ where activists and innovators working on everything from brain to space exploration, creativity to architecture, give passionate talks about events and moments that changed everything in their lives. A speaker’s faith, hope and enthusiasm for their project often has the audience quivering with energy and engagement over their ideas. TED appeals to all of our sensory and cognitive apparatus, whereby possibilities open up to other ways of looking at life and our choices. With the number of ideas growing daily there is a growing desire to collaborate and change the world now!


TED began in 1984 as a one-off event in Silicon Valley, California focused primarily on technology and design. Today people around the world watch live streamed daily TED talks on TED.com on a wide range of topics such as sustainability, education, leadership, cycling culture, horticulture, food culture and entrepreneurship. All talks come with the ethical and moral goal of making the world a better place for all people beyond economic and selfish objectives. TEDx was founded in the spirit of TED’s ‘ideas worth spreading’. The program is designed to provide communities, organisations and individuals with the opportunity to stimulate dialogue, knowledge and community education through TED-like experiences at the local level.

What are the ideas and intentions behind TED?


The list of known TED speakers includes, among others Bill Clinton, Al Gore, Jane Goodall, Richard Dawkins, Bill Gates, Salman Khan, Rob Hopkins, Pam Warhurst and several Nobel Prize winners, all of whom can serve as concrete examples that have changed or even revolutionised their own field. The Khan Academy for instance has revolutionised my students’ access to education. The curriculum can be live streamed from the network and wound back and forth as needed. This ease of access augments the school day and can be used for meaningful, creative and authentic learning activities that experiment with answers to the key issues that children, adolescents and adults face in their communities.

Tedx-talere Pam Wahurst og Rob Hopkins lad os forstå at det netop er både vigtigt og muligt at tage ansvar for de globale udfordringer ved at skabe lokale og solidariske borgerbevægelser, der kan ændre folkets liv og evne til at forestille sig fremtiden. (Risenga Manghezi, TEDxCopenhagen, 2012)

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selskabets grønne generalkasser væk fra den pragmatiske i selvbekræftende siloer af bedrevidenhed som forandringsagenter langt ude på de politiske fløje. Socialfilosof Michael Hardt, har isoleret dygtige eller militaristiske aktivister, der siden 70'erne, ifølge en global vision. Ikke som selvopofrende pilgrime i Ghana for landbefolkningen - en lokal mission med et rent København og bedre uddannelsesmuligheder.

Local Action Global Vision

I følge TEDx-Copenhagen arrangør Ole Kassow er demokratiserende bevægelser ikke blot et spørgsmål om at skabe opmærksomhed og handling på en fælles sag, men også at forbinde alle de uformelle borgerinitiativer og 'bright spots' som allerede er igang med at eksperimenteres med alternative mobiliserende og inspirerende fremtidsscenarier som ex. Emil Wilk, der bedriver social innovation med sit concept Freebikes, der på den ene side udlåner reklamefinansierede cykler til studerende i København for derved ét år senere, at sende cyklerne til fattige ghanesiske skolebørn, der nu kan cykle den lange vej til skole ude fra landdistriktet.

According to TEDxCopenhagen organiser Ole Kassow TED-talks are not all about mobilising movements around a common cause but also about connecting the range of informal citizens' initiatives and 'bright spots' that have already started to experiment with alternative mobilisation and activities such as the innovative bike program designed in Copenhagen by entreprenør Emil Wilk. His bright idea is called Free Bikes (http://www.freebikes.dk/). His organisation lends advertising funded bicycles to students in Copenhagen for a year. After that time these bikes are sent to the disadvantaged Ghanaian students who now can ride to school away from distant rural areas.


This social innovation brings together a unique and viable business idea with environmentally sustainable student transport in Copenhagen and raised educational opportunities in Ghana for the rural population - a local mission with a global vision. Wilk is thus taking a pragmatic approach without getting lost in traditional dichotomies between capitalism and humanism. And that is exactly the quality of Wilk's project. It is earthy and concrete while embodying an engaging vision for humanity which is easily accessible for all groups and individuals without being framed by moral purity or heavy political ideology as has been the case for much relief work in the past. Now we see the emergence of a politics of love and joy as social philosopher Michael Hardt would put it (Hardt & Negri 2009). As Wilk spoke at TEDxCopenhagen the audience immediately responded to him and his ideas. His contagious and authentic faith in his case made many of us in the audience instant followers and advocates for Free Bikes within 4 minutes of him outlining his project and the potential it holds.

From institutions to solidarity movements

For 10-15 år var det ofte os akademikere, der skulle ud og hjælpe skoler, institutioner eller virksomheder med at udvikle og kvalificere den formelle praksis, så den reflekterede værdigrundlag, formålsparagraffer og medarbejdernes, forudsætninger. I dag begynder flere og flere skoler, institutioner og virksomheder at løsrive sig fra deres fundament for at anerkende det multiple og uformelle læringsnetværk deres medarbejdere involverer sig i lokal og globalt hinsides økonomisk egenvinding, strategisk optimering, præstation og effektivitet. Eller som den amerikanske forfatter Daniel Pink formulerer det:

‘Carrots & sticks are so last century. Drive says for 21st century work, we need to upgrade to autonomy, mastery & purpose.’ (203).

Det er denne undergrund af selvorganiserede peer-to-peer-netværk af bevægelser, offentlige, private virksomheder, der skaber kreative mødesteder, hvor nye meningsfulde og borgergenerede svar på peak-oil, klimaforandringer, flerkulturalitet og overforbrug kan spire frem på tværs af industrisamfundets silotænkning fra forrige århundrede. Og det er her TEDx-eventsene tager deres afsæt - i det spirende ressourcebaserede væksthirome, hvor potentielle og alternative fremtidsscenarier kan udvindes og fremmes.
TEDx-arranger Chris Andersen ejer af non-profit Sapling Foundation beskriver begrundelsen for konferencerne på følgende måde:

‘Vi tror lidenskabelig på at ideer kan ændre holdninger, liv og ultimativt forandre verden. Så vi har bygget et clearinghouse, der tilbyder gratis viden og inspiration fra verdens mest inspirerende tænkere, men også et fællesskab af nysgerrige sjæle, der alene eller i fællesskab med andre har mod på at engagere sig i økonomiske, teknologiske eller sociale forandringsprocesser.’

A decade ago schools and other institutions called in experts to oversee qualifications and standards and to align values with function and staff qualifications. Today more and more schools, institutions and companies are breaking away from their top down process and engaging in multiple and informal learning networks around for instance the urban gardening citizen initiative ‘Byhaven 2200’ in Copenhagen or our rapidly expanding food community (Fødevarefællesskabet). Thus employees can now engage in local and global learning networks beyond economic recovery, strategic optimisation, performance and efficiency - as Kassow proposes – ‘the future of companies is to become a movement’. This point is supported by Daniel Pink who twittered on behalf of his latest book *Drive: the surprising truth about what motivates us:*

Carrots and sticks are so last century. Drive says for 21st century work, we need to upgrade to autonomy, mastery and purpose (2010, 203).

Self-organised and networked peer-to-peer movements along with public and private companies are creating creative meeting places where new meaningful citizen-generated responses to peak oil, climate change, consumerism and waste can challenge outdated industrial society’s siloed thinking. And it is here TEDx events gain their momentum – bringing together entrepreneurs and innovators to develop new creative answers to common issues such as sustainability, education and health problems. The openness of this collaborative space allows for alternative future scenarios to emerge.

TED curator Chris Andersen, owner of the non-profit Sapling Foundation, describes the reasons for conferences as follows:

We believe passionately that ideas can change attitudes, lives and ultimately change the world. So we have built a clearinghouse that offers free knowledge and inspiration from the world’s most inspiring thinkers, but also a community of curious souls who alone or jointly have the courage to engage in economic, technological and social change processes.

TEDxCopenhagen - ‘Movement’

Den 18. september var 649 udvalgte mennesker samlet i Bremen Teater for at bruge hele dagen på at se 21 skarptskårne speaks om MOVEMENT, hvilket også var det centrale ansøgningskriterie deltagerne skulle demonstrierne før billetten kunne indløses til eventet. Jeg var omgivet af iværksættere, forskere, virksomhedsledere, konsulenter, forandringsagenter, frivillige og kreative visionære. Indenfor emnerne ledelse, sundhed, forskning og kultur stod 22 talere klar i fuld tilfælde til at levere engagerende og inspirerende taler til os tilhører på blot 18 minutter. Når jeg kan huske samtlig taler fra denne dag, tror jeg det har noget at gøre med energien i rummet, en tro på at vi sammen kan skabe en bedre verden. Min hjerne blev sat på overarbejde, mit hjerte blev sat i brand og min krop hoppede op ned i sædet af begejstring, hver gang en ny taler prikkede hul på de gamle økonomiske vækstdogmer med kighuller ind i forestillede omsorgsfulde, socialt ansvarlige og bæredygtige fremtider. Som om alle talere stillede det kontraktuelle spørgsmål ’hva’ nu hvis...’

On 18 September 2012 I was one of six hundred and forty nine selected people gathered in Bremen Theatre, Copenhagen to spend the day watching twenty clean-cut talks on the theme of ‘Movement’. Our selection had been dependent on our involvement with movements. We had to demonstrate a commitment to movements before being given a place! So I found myself surrounded by entrepreneurs, scientists, business leaders, consultants, change agents, volunteers and creative visionaries.

The twenty speakers that day touched on management, health, research and culture. They had between four and eighteen minutes to get their message across. When I remember all the speakers from this day, I recall the energy in the room that inspired a belief that together we can create a better world. My brain was in overdrive, my heart was on fire and my body jumped up and down in it’s seat with excitement every time a new speaker knocked a hole in the old economic dogmas and offered glimpses of possible futures that were caring, sustainable and responsible. It was as if each speaker asked the counterfactual question ‘what if ...?’

**Signe, Claus, Jacob and Lars**

Når spejderleder Signe Bjørn Jensens indlæg står centralt i min hjerne er det netop grundet hendes simple, men noble budskab om at skabe awsome adults of the future, hendes ydmyghed overfor denne opgave. Hun brænder for at være der for de børn, så de kan blomstre og anerkendes for de læringspotentialer de har med sig. Hendes nærhed, ro og varme fanger os ind, i en fortælling alle os tilhører kan identificere os med og føler os dybt berørt af.

Signe Bjørn Jensen is a scout leader with attitude! She has a simple but powerful message and it affected us...
all because she delivered it with humility and clarity. Her goal is to help kids become ‘awesome adults of the future’. Her passion is to be there for the children so that they can flourish and be recognised for the learning potential they have within them. Her presence, calm and warmth caught us all up in the story.

Claus Meyers speak berører mig fordi den ikke blot handler om at lave mad, men om at udfolde og revitalisere potentialet i oprindelige madkulturer - to broaden the food game - fra masseproduceret hvedetoast og junkfood til genopdagelse af glæden ved lokal- og selvproduceret brød - en madbevægelse.

Claus Meyer’s talk on food also affected me. It was not just about cooking but an exploration of the possibilities of eating local as a way to expand and revitalise the potential of indigenous food cultures. His message was simple: we need to broaden the food game. We need to move away from mass-produced wheat toast and junk food and rediscover the joy of local and self-produced bread. In short, we need a food movement.

Jacob Silas Lund has dedicated his life to football - not as a professional - but as a way to reunite the nation of Sierra Leone which has been devastated by civil war. His organisation Play31 (http://play31.org/) is using football as a tool for building positive identity and healthy communities. This is a down to earth and potent project, der allerede har vundet priser og skabt bemærkelsesværdige resultater.

Jakob Silas Lund has dedicated his life to football - not as a professional - but as a way to reconcile the nation of Sierra Leone which has been devastated by civil war. His organisation Play31 (http://play31.org/) is using football as a tool for building positive identity and healthy communities. This is a down to earth and potent project, which has already won awards and made remarkable achievements.

Lars A.P oplever sig selv lykkeligere som engelsktalende end dansktalende. Der skal tændes op under det sociale termostat, og vi skal huske at hjælpe hinanden hvor vi kan. F***ing Friendly er en hurtigt voksende bevægelse, der vil forandre verdens lykkeligste folk (danskerne) til verdens flinkeste. Om det er at smørre madpakke til børneopdragelse, sundhed, uddannelse eller cykelstier. Et opdragelsesprojekt man samlet set ifølge den tyske didaktiker Wolfgang Klafki kan betegnes som demokratisk dannelse til aktivt medborgerskab (Klafki 2005).

TEDx is about starting positive social and personal movements through the spread of motivating ideas and actions that can provoke or inspire us all to move from the status of self-sufficient individuals to responsible relational individuals who can and want to participate in, and take responsibility for, common societal challenges. As my examples demonstrate this can be in any area of social action. In this sense TEDx acts as a social education project along the lines described by the German didactic Wolfgang Klafki who outlines the processes involved in the democratic formation of active citizenship (Klafki 2005).

Om Tedx bliver en succes eller ej, må måles på i hvor høj grad publikum lader sig mobilisere, inspirere og benytter deres nyvundne idéer aktivt ude i den virkelige verden til at tilslutte sig eller selv igangsatte lokale handlefællesskaber. Altsammen mhp. at skabe bæredygtige forandringsprocesser på tværs af kulturer, religioner og institutioner med henblik på at udfordre ‘business as usual’ og således gøre livet bedre for alle mennesker.

Ultimately the success of both TED and TEDx must be measured by the extent to which the audience is mobilised and inspired to use their newfound knowledge in the ‘real’ world. My TEDx experience has inspired me with the possibilities for creating sustainable change processes across cultures, religions and institutions in order to challenge ‘business as usual’ and thus make life better for all people.
Глас стабільності економічної, політичної, соціальної ситуації є процеси, питання сталості розвитку і стабільності протягом 1990-х рр. відбулися потужні модернізаційні спадкоємності. В нових пострадянських державах, де соціальному розвитку є синонім стійкості і новацій, то стабільність у економічному, політичному, соціальному розвитку є приоритетним для суспільства. Глас стабільності експлуатується різними політичними силами через його привабливість для основної маси населення та своєрідну "втомуленість" і розчарування людей у демократії пострадянського зразка, яка багато в чому ознаменувалася системною кризою та вседозволеністю для верхівки суспільства. В побутовій масовій свідомості надовго відбилася уявна сталість економічного та політичного розвитку СРСР (Союз Радянських Соціалістичних Республік), де не було політичної конкуренції та великої майнової нерівніс. Саме до такої стабільності тяжіє населення, яке прагне відновити зрозумілу для себе систему життєвих координат.

The modern world is characterised by a constant struggle between two opposing trends - modernisation and stability. If modernisation is a source of innovation, the stability of the economic, political and social development is synonymous with order and continuity. In the new post-Soviet states, which during the 1990s experienced powerful modernisation processes, the issue of sustainable development and stability in the economic, political and social arenas is a priority for society. The slogan of stability has been exploited by various political forces because of its appeal to the general populace who are experiencing 'fatigue' and frustration over the design of post-Soviet democracy, which has been largely marked by systemic crisis and instability at the top of society. Domestic public consciousness, long shaped by the apparent order and predictability of economic and political life of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) where there was no political competition and low-income inequality, now meets with the insecurities of post-Soviet life. This is the kind of stability people understand, one which provides recognisable coordinates of life.
Today instability comes from two main sources: political modernisation, which seeks to balance the democratic and authoritarian dynamics of the political regime; and economic instability, which has resulted from changes in the general ownership of the means of production. The second component is the main source of numerous economic and environmental problems, since the division of property in society is far from complete and is the arena of intense competition. Consequently the current situation is marked by the struggle for property accompanied by the primitive accumulation of capital, the effects of mass unemployment, a disregard of labour laws, meagre wages and social insecurity in general. In society there is a big difference in income levels, the majority of the population lives in poverty. Inflationary currency makes it impossible to accumulate sufficient capital, as in the former Soviet Union, so funds are invested in luxury goods such as expensive cars, desktop computers, and expensive household items.

Insecurity resulting from corruption in government, courts, and law enforcement agencies has fostered a culture of short-termism and risk taking. This has resulted in modern business owners and small entrepreneurs trying to get the maximum profit in the shortest possible time. They find loopholes in the law and endanger the environment, health and even the lives of consumers of their products. Entrepreneurs do not hesitate to save on wastewater treatment plants, add to food chemicals and so on. Because of corruption the authorities cannot effectively protect the consumer and the citizens of Ukraine from environmental threats. The best protection from unethical producers comes from public opinion and community organisations.

Political modernisation in post-Soviet countries began with the goal of establishing a democratic Western European model. Based on a narrow understanding of democracy as a pluralism of opinions and views, a variety of ideologies spread throughout all post-Soviet countries that cover the entire political spectrum: conservative, liberal and radical. However, the weakness of political parties and progressive impoverishment caused a distrust of ideologies with implications across the political spectrum. Currently political parties in Ukraine and other former Soviet countries are struggling; most have programs that demonstrate liberal values, although they may be called socialist or social democratic. Parties rely strongly on the image of their leaders to attract voters and promote a clear identity. Some parties even run with the name of their leaders such as the Tugipko Tymoshenko party. The political spectrum reflects the low level of political culture citizens, which is characteristic of totalitarian and post-totalitarian states. The introduction of a proportional system of parliamentary elections led to the formation of a quasi-two-party system of powerful political blocs that act as spokesmen for the main financial and industrial groups, which can be called political parties.

З точки зору політичного розвитку, на пострадянському просторі сформувалися три групи країн, що відрізняються ставленням до політичної демократії. Перша група – країни Балтії, які з самого початку незалежності дотримувалися стійких демократичних принципів, які не стали в залежність від економічних проблем. Друга група – країни нестійкої демократії:
In terms of political development, the former Soviet Union falls into three groups, each with differing attitudes towards political democracy. The first group comprises the Baltic countries, which from the beginning of independence have maintained stable democratic principles, which are not dependent on economic issues. The second group consists of countries with fragile democracies: Ukraine and Georgia, where there are strong political opposition parties. This has resulted in the ‘colour’ revolutions where political power has not been usurped by one political force. The third group is made up of countries that have either become an authoritarian regime (Central Asia), or are evolving into authoritarian regimes: Russia, Belarus, Armenia and Azerbaijan. The presence of these groups reflects the unequal political and economic circumstances of development in the former USSR, which were not apparent at the time, but have now become a determining factor in the political situation of each country.

Countries in the first and third groups have already achieved a degree of stability, but of qualitatively different kinds. If the Baltic countries are now full members of the European Union and have achieved a certain level of economic development, the countries in the third group accepted, in the absence of a strong opposition, the political stability of a dictatorship of one political party or political clan. Although economic problems in these countries are extremely sharp, solving their legal and constitutional problems has failed. As a result of the accumulation of societal problems in these countries movements are emerging to challenge the monopoly on power. Hence the use of force by the state against the opposition in Russia, Belarus, and the riots in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.

In terms of global perspective the above analysis suggests three vectors into the future for post-Soviet states:

1. Group 1 countries continue their direct path to democracy, economic stability, social development and ‘soft sustainability’ leading to the avoidance of major social upheaval.

2. Group 2 countries continue an ongoing torturous struggle between different political factions and clans that use the principles of political marketing in their favour. In this situation, economic problems and social conflicts can be resolved by democratic means, but economic stability remains just a political slogan because of the uneven distribution of property among the population and the high dependence on exports of a narrow group of products: for Ukraine - metal, chemicals and weapons.
3. Group 3 countries gain political stability via a one-party system in which political rivals are excluded from the political struggle. The division of property between clans is generally ended, social justice and welfare of the citizens remains a meaningless slogan. The general population is guaranteed a bare minimum of physical security while the judiciary and law enforcement agencies serve the ruling clans.

As you can see, the twenty-year history of the post-Soviet countries has shown a desire for stability. In most countries it is almost reached, only Ukraine and Georgia stand out. However, for these two countries instability is positive because there is still the possibility for democratic prospects and economic welfare. Moreover, the political volatility of these countries is a good indicator of the presence in society of healthy forces able to resist the onset of the financial and economic clans seeking to establish full control over society.

Authors
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**Self Sufficiency – Fact or Fiction**

**Derek Hayward**

I made the following bold statement on New Zealand Country Calendar TV program in 2005: “self-sufficiency is not possible or even desirable, community self-sufficiency is”. The program told the story of eight partners, myself one of them, who had created an intentional community-based organic commercial farm, the project had matured over 15 years, a producer of gold medal wines, olive oil, and lavender products. All products were organic and farm activity also included a high level of personal food production. The structure included elements of Maori landholding, individual commercial crop cost centres, shared common land, and simple entry and exit rules.

This structure was designed to allow flexible participation in all commercial activities, discourage personal profiteering, and harness the collective individual talents of all partners to farm projects and administration. I was the only partner to live full time on the farm and derive an income, which was bolstered by my own savings. This put me in a unique situation to investigate the realities of self-sufficiency, whilst experiencing a community business.

My preparation for entering a community-based farm had been as thorough as I could make it. Having no history or experience of farming or collective living was somewhat of an impediment. The foundation for wanting such an experience had been supported by a realisation that in New Zealand I could easily manifest such a structure and that my heart and soul needed the connection to Earth.

Raised in a 1960s UK working class suburb, the closest I got was dad’s oral history of back yard farming and grandparent’s allotments. A corporate IT career had been my passport to the world. I have seen most of the planet working for a Middle Eastern airline, hopped around Europe for a cosmetics company, and enjoyed North America as a senior consultant. Australia and New Zealand were my last office days, board level and leading edge projects, headhunted, and finally dismayed by the machine, I left that security, shelter and familiarity. I walked an exciting and sometimes miraculous path through meditation, spirituality, counselling, and bodywork, and finally my realisation of what God meant for me. The grounding of my search for community was born on an advanced Permaculture course and I knew that my path was set.
I began this new journey with a small home and workshop built from locally milled timber, using healthy home products, a homebuilt compost toilet and solar hot water system; a 0.5 kilowatt solar array, deep-cycle batteries, and an inverter; roof water tanks; a caravan and 4WD truck; an extensive range of tools; slow Internet connection, laptop, washing machine, gas cooker, and a rifle. No TV, generator, grid, close neighbours, fences, electricity and water bills, traffic, insurance, or bosses. Farm maintenance and rates were funded through a weekly levy to the farm account.

**Self-sufficiency, what is it?**

My own version was to arrive trained, with all the tools and materials, and see how all the inputs to our life could be replaced by self-creation on the land, and all the outputs could be reused.

We had no set boundaries on 150 acres of regrowth Bush. Permaculture, Bio-dynamics, Building, Electrical and Plumbing, Feng-Shui, Dowsing, Meditation, Naturopathy, Beekeeping, Roading, Landscaping, Cash cropping, Preserving, Coppicing, Guitar playing, History…. to list a few of the many crafts we developed.

The wake-up calls to self-sufficiency being impossible were many:

- Slicing the end of a thumb and travelling three hours to the closest surgeon who saved it rather than amputating half of it
- Choosing to connect to the grid after the third set of deep-cycle batteries failed, the solar panels were delaminating and the inverter had blown up
- Getting caught in an open field with a family of wild pigs
- Wildlife disappearing when we started eating them
- Cash crops failing
- Leaving the farm to do paid work
- Becoming WWOOF hosts (Willing Workers on Organic Farm) to earn labour, and a second set of hands, and someone to talk to
- Driving one hour to the closest video shop
- Veggie co-op’s, markets, swaps, clothes, repairs, road maintenance…

The list goes on. It is a bleak reminder in those moments, how much we need others for security, safety, skills and knowledge, co-creativity, entertainment, and trading.

In these challenging times, many people comment they will “head for the hills” with a gun, some seeds and a lighter, or for the enthusiastic, a bunker filled with tins of beans. A suburban version seems to be solar panels, four years of dehydrated food, and a sizeable armament. It's heroic, the epic of Robinson Crusoe, and yet it seems to be the product of suburban fences, three hours of TV a day, schooling, and Facebook…. sufficient not self-sufficient.

**The Need for Community**

For me the basic building block of human survival and sustainability lies at the tribal or community level. It would appear that human domination of the planet was achieved using this basic unit. We know “it takes a village to raise a child", and in tribal areas the worst punishment is eviction from your tribe.

The New Zealand farm project is on hold for me. I have taken that study for sustainable community to its possible limits in that situation in the first world. I am excited to continue the study.

I have recently been invited to support and manage the creation of a sustainable village in Fiji. As we discuss what the parameters and possibilities exist for them, with no funding, and full support from the PM down, it begins to evolve toward a traditional village with the best of Third World technology, and all robust mechanics that can be built and maintained by the village. Common village problems are the use of agricultural chemicals, pollution of rivers and seas, and a petrol-based energy supply. The Fiji project represents for me the possibility to explore community living in a situation not possible in the first world, in these times.

Climate change, resource depletion, GFC, overpopulation, pollution, species extinction… the list of challenges facing the human race are huge. We may see the importation of these project results to the first world in the near future. Cuba has been an example of what can happen, when resources are removed from a dependant society, and the choices that were made to survive. A strong community response was able to overcome a near catastrophe, where individual skills were shared and collectively utilised. I recall the story of finding the last oxen trainer, 70 years of age, in a remote corner of the island, a skill to be valued and nurtured.

If community is the basic unit of human sufficiency, then what is the world fabric that could hold these units together interacting, sharing, creating, and evolving. History tells us much of what has worked, and not. When radical change has occurred the process has usually been painful, and destructive. Our empires have been inflexible, and our systems bound up with growth and ownership. Perhaps a reflection of our own egos well trained, since we stood up and grabbed what we could, and hid in caves.

There are many calls to action as this paradigm collapses. My own efforts have included the Transition
Town (TT) movement, borne of Permaculture and the ability from the ground up to shape a future resilient community. A huge success in New Zealand, which quickly went national and viral, this approach suits a small population of land-based hands on communities. Avatar, a worldwide self-growth movement, based on modern-day Buddhism offers other tools that help us clean up our own egos so that our inner manifests in the outer.

The GFC hit New Zealand before we left. We consider ourselves almost refugees, arriving in Australia after a short stay in the UK, we have been here four years. Our New Zealand property is probably worth a third of what it was in the bubble, most of my friends either losing all investments, or in financial trouble. I felt like a bad news bearer, warning people in the UK and Australia what was coming. I was an Australian Government Home Sustainability Assessor, for two years and visited hundreds of homes ready to pass on my skills and news, and for the most part met by a “it can’t happen here” attitude. I established a local TT movement in my local town. It’s affluent, and for all the advertising, networking and movie showings, opening our own home for street meetings, we did not manage to engage a single person who was not already active in this subject. My interest is in the psychology of change, how bad does it have to get, and how leadership is created. I now use humour as an effective tool to get past the mental blocks.

Where to from here?
We still have to survive in the current paradigm, working enough to live, educating our children, staying abreast of the fast changes in the world, and helping to shape what the next paradigm might be.

I observe in the leaders I choose to listen to, a tendency to create a set of future multiple scenarios, which cover anything from hippy communes to Mad Max gangs, or Big Brother domination. I see no encouragement from our current leaders to engage or lead the way to a peaceful transition. It would appear if the Internet were turned off, and our Debt based economy stopped, that we would have a world of isolated individuals, in debt, and hungry. Is this a return to slavery, the power source before coal and oil? Perhaps this is why most advice I receive is ‘get out of debt, and find your tribe’.

To better understand this fast changing environment I have enrolled in a Graduate Certificate in Future Studies. There I hope to find a forum with others in the same dilemma, and investigate what my contribution could be. I conclude that self-sufficiency is neither possible nor something we wish to attain. We need collective sufficiency, which brings with it the support and resilience of a community in order to survive. As one experienced bushman once said to me “we have to sleep”. Furthermore we all need to be involved in weaving the fabric of a world society that can nurture, and adapt to, individual and collective needs, and stimulate the full potential of our species, as a transformative power for unconditional love.

Author
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Derek is currently engaged in facilitating a sustainable village in Fiji, whilst completing a Postgraduate Diploma in Futures studies at the University of the Sunshine Coast. He lives with his partner and their six-year-old daughter in Queensland, Australia.

COMMENTARY – CHORUS

The Singapore Conversation: Visions of a flourishing society

Benjamin Ho

在新加坡2012年国庆群众大会，总理李显龙提出了一项“新加坡对话”，以三方面“心、望、家”作为参考体系。身为新加坡公民，国家的前景及它以后要迈向的方向与我息息相关。因此，这次的‘新加坡对话’是一项课堂的讨论，乃是牵涉到各生活层面的交流及国家下一代的期望。

At the National Day Rally 2012, Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong initiated a ‘Singapore Conversation’, providing three key aspects as the guiding framework – ‘heart, hope and home’. As a Singapore citizen, the country’s future and direction is something I am intimately related to. As such, this National conversation is not simply an academic discussion, but concerns many aspects of national life and the aspirations of our future generations.

要达到一个繁荣社会的愿景，首先，我们必须先认出我们现今的处境。由于全球化（globalisation）、科技化（technology）所
To arrive at our vision of a flourishing future, we need to first recognise our current predicament. Indeed globalisation and technology have brought about immense changes in our society and as a result, we are vastly different from yesteryears. For instance, the population of foreigners and permanent residents in Singapore now stands at 36 per cent in 2010 as compared to 10 per cent in 1980; consequently, our society is now more multicultural and multireligious in nature.

In recent years, Singapore has witnessed an increase in anti-foreigner sentiments, both online and offline. Many Singaporeans are concerned that the presence of foreigners would threaten their economic livelihood.

In this way, our definition of a flourishing society is often based on an individualistic, self-seeking motivation; the fulfillment of material wants become our ultimate objective. American psychologist Philip Rieff once noted that ours is a culture of the pursuit of pleasure, not a culture of sustained endeavor to lead a good or meaningful life.

In the early days of Singapore’s founding, many of our forefathers came to the country empty-handed. As a result of their hard work and determination, we have arrived at today’s success. As such, what we sow today will result in a reward tomorrow; we need to make a right choice in order to arrive at our goal of ‘heart, hope and home’.
Port: Embracing Another Path

1
Oh vast expanse of water!
Oh Port of Love, Commerce and Communication!
Port of Hamburg upon Elba
Birds and clouds flying upon your breast
Giving shelter to many
Men, ships and millions of dreams
Giving the city
Wealth and soul
Art and commerce

2
Oh Port!
I had gone this morning to your heart-center
City library and the Kunsthall
Books, Arts and flowers
From world over
A new art of Europe and the world
A new blossoming of souls and co-souls
Oh Port!
When people are deep asleep in the night
You must be coming to embrace the beautiful arts
And the books of Light

3
Oh Port!
Now so many big ships in your breast
Bringing millions of boxes from China
And all across the world
Digging your breast deeper and deeper
For more and more copper and copper
You silently shed tears
My tears flow with yours
Our tears flow with yours

4
Oh vast expanse of water!
Oh dear Port!
Let us ask together
Our soul and society
Why this mad rush?
Why this greed?
When mountains of wave arise
Who would shelter men and ships?
Would not they be buried in water?
The meditative soul of port
Tells us in this moment of prayer
A new path of embrace is possible
A new orientation
A new path of local production and consumption
A new bathing with our hands and hearts together
A new green and golden
Road, river and ocean of life
A new blossoming of Soul, Society and Nature

Ananta Kumar Giri,
Madras Institute of Development Studies, India


**Message from the Philippines**

**MARIA VICTORIA PINEDA**

*Editor’s note:* In the following Chorus reflection Maria Victoria Pineda charts the historical and cultural context in which she has entered the Gogol Project (See Article 3 by Bjurström). For Pineda her inspiration and determination both lie in the place story and culture has in Filipino culture. Her deep memory brings an added awareness of the cultural imperative to use story and play to reclaim agency in a world in which some stories count more than others. In the following the Gogol project is situated as a cultural extension of the Filipino love of drama and also as a contemporary response to historical wrongs in which a hierarchy of cultures were imposed on the Filipino cultural landscape.

1. As early as the sixteenth century, the Filipinos had taken drama as a form of entertainment in their lives. Drama was encapsulated by the zarzuela, locally known as sarswela, typically with fighting and conflict, introduced to the Filipinos during Spanish rule (sixteenth to nineteenth century). Eventually, drama became part of the everyday consciousness of Filipinos who listened to and watched different heroic and love stories.

During the American period (late nineteenth to early twentieth century), use of the radio and later the television was introduced. Radio dramas became popular during the 1950s. The very first radio drama was ‘Gulong ng Palad’ the ‘Wheel of the Palm’ or ‘Wheel of Fate’ in 1949 (DZRH interactive, 2009). Once the busy time in the morning was over, radio drama would fill the air and become the daily dose during coffee breaks. Other similar shows were introduced in the afternoon during lull hours. Life was slow during this time, stories were told using different voiceovers and sound effects that created strong imaginative inner spaces among the listeners. The radio drama became a motion picture in the minds as it was heard by many Filipinos.

At present, radio dramas are still heard by many rural folks. Most of them had advanced to television as soap operas. But the formula is the same with the story having different episodes and unfolding over months. Soap operas are called teleserye, tele for television, serye is the Tagalog for series. The term has other synonyms like telenovela or teledrama. These teledramas are shown at prime time, five days a week.

The subjective delivery and meanings of the story is evident, but that did not matter. For most Pinoys, aka Filipinos, the teleserye drama brings a gratifying moment that offers them an escape from the tiring pressure of work. The Filipino attitude also exhibits great interest in social realities. The drama happens to be the small box of secrets that holds all the emotions of the viewer – passion, sympathy, misery, determination, empathy, ambition, anger, and love. The feelings become the connection to the drama and the shared experience of the Filipino audience.

Hence drama as a medium to impart stories is a strong cultural artefact in the life of the Filipinos. It reminds people how lives are very much interlinked even though they are diverse. The Filipino love of life dramas hopefully inspires the extraordinary Gogol Interplayground project.

2. Around fifty countries participated in what may be considered as the first human exhibit in the St. Louis World’s Fair of 1904. One of the participating countries was the Philippines occupying around twenty hectares of the exhibit area to accommodate approximately one thousand two hundred Filipinos and their dwelling places. These were men, women and their children representing some of the dominant and indigenous Filipino groups such as the Igorots, Visayan, Bagobo, Maranao, and the Moro (Fermin, 2004: 128-140).

Many Americans had compared our local indigenous Igorots to their American Indians as “savages, head-hunters and dog-eaters” (ibid: 27-28). Little did they know that these Igorots were highly knowledgeable of plants and animals (ibid: 152), that they were the most resilient among our aborigines with highly developed agricultural and foraging skills (Seitz, 2004).

The exhibition had capitalised on our indigenous groups creating the impression that Filipinos lacked civilisation, faith and culture. It was a painful exposition for many Filipinos at that time, both for those who were in the fair and those waging independence struggles from the Americans. It also pained the many literate Filipinos, some of whom were excellent in science, the arts and languages and who had been Christianised for over three centuries. As early as the 1900s, Filipinos already had a great awareness of the multi-culturality of their nation.

While many of the American spectators of that time perceived the Filipinos to be savages, the exposition itself had been more savage. The world fair led many people to believe that the Philippines is an uncivilised nation in need of civilising by the Americans. However, it was the need to ‘tame’ the Philippines that was an example of American imperialist hegemony. Even if the Americans thought that the participation of the Filipinos in this exhibition was a form of reciprocity that extended political endowment and freedom, it was sending the message that culture is hierarchical. This is not the way to understand cultures. Claude Levi- Strauss posited that
while humans are diverse, they have also many things in common, and so it is wrong to understand cultures as reflecting a “hierarchy of progress or complexity.” (Edgar & Sedgwick, 2002: 141).

3.

The Gogol Interplayground project is a bold attempt to explore culture not in this hierarchical way but rather as a rhizome driven by a pure spirit of love and respect for cultures (Bussey et al, 2012). The project is an exploration in preserving and enriching the knowledge and respectful understanding of cultures.

Each participating institution or group will have its own interpretation of Gogol's drama The Government Inspector, and each participant will weave in varying perspectives and insights. As the participant reconnects to her past, she views the future with vigorous hope, for she is not alone in her drive to pursue positive change, the others in the Gogol Interplayground network share the same goal. Together we all seek to influence others to act with the same intention.

Of course, the Gogol Interplayground's attempt to collect different inspirational stories of struggle for social change and good governance will not be easy. The web as a funnel may become filled up and clogged with good stories, which prevent an easy flow between participants. Thus great stories may be filtered out. There are many challenges.

Importantly for me the Gogol Interplayground serves as a social space for exchanging adventures and tragedies. It is in the exchange that contributors learn more about themselves and the world. It is that moment of unravelling that makes the contributors participate in conscientious reflection, and gain deeper understanding as many stories are encountered.

From our small archipelago in Southeast Asia, it is our deep wish to see Gogol Intercultural Playground become a meaningful funnel of life’s possibilities and dreams, to bring messages of continued, beautiful hope to the world and committed love and respect for our earth.

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COMMENTARY – CHORUS

SevGen: A loving, living, laughing, listening and learning place beyond what you can see

TERRI WALLER

I am a woman of mixed Aboriginal, Indonesian, Irish and Estonian descent. I am currently singing up SevGen: A loving, living, laughing, listening and learning place-Beyond what you can see. In this article I reflect on my quest to find a sustainable educational process.

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When people ask me where the concept came from I say the SevGen concept has its origins in an intergenerational story of disconnection from mainstream schooling. My grandmother was forbidden to go to school beyond year three, my father refused to go to school beyond year seven and I never felt connected to the learning the school environment offered. I remember walking home one day from school with my oldest child when he was in grade one. I asked him how school had been that day and he replied, ‘Mum have you ever felt like you could unzip yourself and the real you would step out’.

I am a woman of mixed Aboriginal, Indonesian, Irish and Estonian descent. I am currently singing up SevGen: A loving, living, laughing, listening and learning place-Beyond what you can see. In this article I reflect on my quest to find a sustainable educational process.

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This conversation was the spark that gave fire to my reflecting, thinking, and imagining a different way of being ‘educated’ and ‘grown up’. My belief in a different approach is steeped in memories of Indigenous Australian culture, often called the ‘Murri way’. This ‘way’ is founded on the values of trust, respect, and mutuality, as well as the importance of relationship, caring and sharing, and storytelling and humour. The value of this approach has been confirmed in my heart watching the positive results of allowing Murri way principles to guide the ‘growing up’ of my six children.

All through my children’s schooling years I have been called to task by school classroom teachers, principals and other school support staff - guidance officers and learning support teachers - for giving my children so much time off school. In my mind I was giving them so much more by allowing them to spend time with their family in a loving, living, laughing, listening and learning environment. The results are proving me right with my six children all growing up to be creative, talented and caring young people supportive of each other, their community and the planet.

In 2005 I began a Bachelor of Education. At this point my reflecting, thinking and imagining gave way to researching and writing on alternative education. On graduating I got a job at an Independent School that was going through transition and was under the mentorship of a proponent of self-directed learning. During this time I was able to get a sense of the benefits of a self-directed approach and incorporated this into the SevGen vision. In August 2010 the mentor was asked to leave the school and in April 2011 I too was told there was no longer a classroom position for me at the school. When one door closes another one opens and the rest is history or, as David my husband is given to say in loving support, ‘the rest is the future’.

SevGen is short for Seven Generations and is based on the Indigenous ecological thinking that says that every human deliberation must consider the impacts on seven generations into the future. SevGen is a 3E model where ethical Enterprise supports flow Education which ignites creative Entrepreneurship. For me education is at the heart of the concept. It is a reciprocal, relationship and location based offering and as such is emerging as an authentic Australian pedagogy imbued with Murri Way.

This open vibrant approach to learning I call flow education. I have taken the concept from flow theory which at its most basic is about enjoyable, effortless learning because the learner has situated themselves in an optimal environment of their own design and is intrinsically motivated and organised by passion and purpose. SevGen will encourage, develop and support a self-directed learning approach allowing each person to take responsibility for their own learning. Education at SevGen will recognise the value of competencies, skills and knowledge, but also bring focus to the development of capability and qualities of creativity, problem-solving, leadership, networking, personal qualities such as resilience, and personal values such as honesty and courage.

SevGen will be about celebrating the personal journey, in a social context, encouraging peer mentoring and group skills. At SevGen the value of tacit (as distinct from explicit) knowledge transfer will be privileged and as such the focus will be on learning-by-doing, the on-the-job/apprenticeship style learning. This is the just-in-time learning of purpose education and includes participatory action and experiential learning. In flow terms SevGen will hold the space for each one of us to discover our passion and give us space to practise ‘mastery’ of it.

I want to stress that the SevGen approach does not discount the value of learning from other alternative or more traditional approaches, but rather broadens the concept of a ‘teacher’ to include any person or experience that supports learning.

I am now in the process of forming an Indigenous organisation that will be able to educate children and adults using the SevGen approach. This organisation will incorporate education, enterprise, ethics, environment and creative entrepreneurship. People are being invited to experience SevGen education and through this, I am building grass roots, community and corporate support and interest in this work. My ambition is to share SevGen by developing a permanent learning space in the beautiful Mothar Mountain area of South East Queensland, Australia.

The next step is to present the SevGen ambition to the world in a crowd funding project to realise the SevGen ambition and make great things happen. The SevGen team are energetic, hard working dedicated people excited about the 3E vision. There has been great support by many thinkers, movers and shakers I have met along the way as I yarn up SevGen and I am thrilled they share the vision and ambition for an Enterprise, Education and Entrepreneurship model.

There is still room and need for more journeymen, women and children who are, one and all, always welcome and invited to experience the many aspects SevGen has to offer. If you would like to help sing up SevGen please get in contact with me... terri@sevgen.com.au.
Author
Terri Waller has a mixed Indigenous heritage and is from the DTulua (Aboriginal), Kunta (Indonesian), Ryan (Irish) and Hill (Estonian) clans. This culturally diverse background rolled into one thoughtful person set a determined path to create an accepting and allowing environment for the true honouring of the full self: What is and What can be. Terri lives at Doonan in South East Queensland’s Noosa hinterland where she, her husband David, and their six children have hand built their beautiful strawbale home. Terri has a Bachelor of Education, Bachelor of Arts, Certificate IV in project management and is currently undertaking a Certificate IV in Business and Certificate IV TAE. Terri says that these qualifications are complimented by many others she has acquired from the School of Life.

Commentary – Chorus
Creating the Conditions for Growth and Learning: Mindfulness as a contribution to sustainable learning
Lina Lanestrand
Mindfulness is a concept that originated in Buddhist philosophy and is referred to as sati (Plank 2011). Mindfulness is often, in Swedish, translated as awareness of the present moment. In Buddhism, sati is a complex term and can be described and interpreted in different ways. Sati has been practised for a long time to help people achieve a balanced mind as a way to create a more peaceful world. Sati is practised for instance through meditation and is characterised by approaches like awareness, non-judgment and presence. In the West, mindfulness is applied primarily to help people to manage stress, illness and difficulties in life. The religious and philosophical elements of mindfulness have been removed in the West where it is used as a tool in our busy lives.

The qualitative study Mindfulness - learning processes in awareness of the presence (Lanestrand 2012) is based on three narrative written stories and five deep narrative interviews with people who practice mindfulness in their everyday life. Six of the participants are trained mindfulness instructors. The study is the basis for this article and demonstrates that mindfulness, from a pedagogical perspective, is a learning process with an ethical dimension that creates space. If education involves mindfulness as a way to create the best conditions for learning it can contribute to sustainable learning. But this can be quite radical. Jacques Rancière (1991) for instance argues that education has a hidden agenda, which makes people and pupils believe that they cannot learn and educate themselves. Mindfulness is a powerful tool that enables the learner to experience connection with oneself, our ability to develop and learn, which can contribute to emancipating people.

The mindful space explored in my study found that mindfulness provides room for individual contact with oneself, contact with others, contact with existential and spiritual aspects of life, as well as a deeper experience of time that allows for moments or spaces in time that foster re-perceiving, a shift in perspective. This multiple space provides room for our human abilities to learn and grow. The actual learning process of mindfulness has parallels with John Dewey’s (2009) concept of learning by doing. Hence, developing mindfulness is achieved through experiences, insights and the practice of meditation and mindfulness-based exercises.

Individual experience is central to mindfulness yet Dewey (2009) states that experience can have both passive and active elements. The active part involves making experiences while the passive means going through something and finding oneself in a situation/experience as it is. Such learning ‘as-it-is’ also means to accept the consequences that arise from our actions. Dewey notes:

When we experience something we observe it and we do something with it, then we suffer or endure the consequences. We do something about the conditions and then they do something to us in return, such is the specific combination (Dewey 2009: 183).

A change is created, according to Dewey, when we progress from having done something to experiencing
the consequences that this causes and internalising this change within ourselves. This inner change also gives the event a meaning, and that is what happens when we learn something. Dewey exemplifies this with a child burning her finger in a candle flame. The external change, the burning of the finger, is only relevant when it is linked with the previous action (putting the finger in the flame) and when it is connected with the significance (of pain) that the child experienced - then there is learning. Dewey argues that learning through experience involves both body and mind and is both active and passive.

...the only way to understand what is meant by direct experience of something is to have it yourself (2009: 282).

All participants in the study (Lanestrand 2012) expressed precisely what Dewey (2009) describes, namely that mindfulness can only be fully understood through one’s own experience. This means that mindfulness is difficult to define fully with just words. There is an embodied and solitary dimension to this kind of understanding. Ranciére (1991) explains that the learning that you do by yourself, without explanations, is a universal learning. This has parallels with Dewey's (2009) learning by doing because both focus on learning by oneself from life itself and our own experience.

Mindfulness Creates Conditions for Growing

The results of the study (Lanestrand 2012) demonstrate that participants who continually apply mindfulness as part of their everyday lives experience positive changes. These changes mean that they can manage life, themselves and other people better. Furthermore they experience life as richer than before. These results match many other different scientific studies of mindfulness (Plank 2011). As participants described the effects of mindfulness in their daily lives the connections to Dewey’s (2009) philosophy became clearer.

Dewey sees immaturity as one prerequisite for human learning and development. Immaturity is a complex term, since it has negative connotations. Potential is perhaps a better term – as it conveys the possibility of growing and learning. The term immaturity corresponds well, however, with some of the approaches applied in mindfulness such as curiosity and beginner's mind. This approach means having an open mind and being curious about each new encounter and situation (including with yourself) while refraining from having ready answers and automatic reactions.

Dewey (2009) argues that our view of immaturity affects our view of learning. Immaturity is often regarded as a deficiency, which leads to the risk that education and development are used to correct this deficiency, so that the child achieves ‘maturity’. Adults are considered to be mature and this establishes a norm around ‘adulthood’. This has the consequence that opportunities and abilities in the present are likely to be underestimated and overlooked. It is important to recognise that both adults and children are in a constant process of learning and growing and that development occurs under various conditions. Ultimately Dewey believes that growing itself is life and writes:

...life is development, and to develop, to grow is life (ibid: 88).

Accordingly, development ceases when it is replaced by passive adaptation. For him learning itself is always the goal, the content learnt is of secondary consideration.

Growing is considered too easily as something that has a goal rather than being a goal (ibid: 89).

To understand learning in this we come to appreciate that life itself is about learning and that the role of mindful attention is to deepen our ongoing learning journeys. Such a perspective accepts all life as of unique value and creates a non-violent learning space from which the questions of sustainability arise. In this way mindfulness can contribute to forms of holistic education that involve new perspectives on learning, human beings and life, as well as nature.

Mindfulness as Process

Participants in the study support Dewey's position. They described mindfulness as a process, a journey without a goal. As one participant noted:

Mindfulness is a continuous journey, constantly, without goals, mindfulness is something that is constantly evolving, and life really is so rich and has so many dimensions. A journey of discovery, without specific goals, it’s about living life as full as possible and to take advantage of the moments and the resources you have, not only for yourself but also for others (Lanestrand 2012: 40).

Thus mindfulness itself becomes an example of engaged-learning, where the learning process itself is essential. Such a perspective challenges conventional learning models, which push children to meet a uniform outcome. This implicit goal often means that children should be as adults. This results in the uniqueness and individuality of each person being suppressed and the love of learning being killed. Instead, external factors such as reward and punishment are used to achieve the desired outcome. To
challenge this mindful education creates the conditions for the desire to learn directly from life itself.

Ranciére (1991) helps us here as he writes about how we all learn our native language by ourselves, without any explanations. He argues that the will to learn emerges from the context in which the child resides. The context itself draws forth the learning:

The method of equality was above all a method of the will. One could learn by oneself and without a master explicator when one wanted to, propelled by one's own desire or by the constraint of the situation (Rancière 1991: 12).

Ranciére also notes that a child only needs a master when her own will is weak or when she is having problems getting on her own track. For Ranciére (1991) this suggests a core principle of universal teaching:

One must learn something and relate everything else to it (1991: 20).

Perhaps this is what sustainable learning itself means: to be empowered to learn from your own interest, by your own will and to learn by doing and to create context and meaningfulness?

Mindfulness is Slow

All participants (Lanestrand 2012) refer in different ways to the child's spontaneous and natural way of being in the present. One of the participants stated that as children we are all in the core of ourselves, alive to the present, but that as we grow we put a lid on who we are. When confronting this 'lid' we will experience pain because it prevents us from being in direct contact with ourselves. For learning to be sustainable and foster sustainable life habits this lid needs to be challenged.

Dewey writes that it is important to be understood as the one you are, to be seen and appreciated for it, which is a prerequisite for being able to do and contribute to society.

If you never will be understood or appreciated for who you are, you lose some of your ability to be a resource for other goals (2009: 289).

All participants (Lanestrand 2012) testify that the application of mindfulness awakens this ability to grow and develop as a person. From Dewey's perspective mindfulness is something that relieves adults from the burden of their maturity and instead gives life to their immaturity; or put more simply – mindfulness awakens their developmental potential. It is clear that mindfulness can help us to deal with questions about sustainability in a new way. Orr (2002) writes that we need to start from where we are.

For most of us the Great Work must begin where we are, in the small acts of everyday life, stitching together a pattern of loyalty and faithfulness to a higher order of being (2002: 5).

To be able to begin where we are, we need to mindfully pay attention to ourselves in the moment. Then we can take new steps in sustainability development.

Orr also talks about fast and slow knowledge. He argues that fast knowledge has terrible consequences for human beings, animals and nature.

But many, if not most, of the ecological, economic, social, and psychological ailments that beset contemporary society can be attributed directly or indirectly to knowledge acquired and applied before we had time to think it through carefully. (ibid: 37)

He continues this line of argument stating that the consequences of fast knowledge are deferred to the future.

The result is that the system of fast knowledge creates social traps in which the benefits occur in the near term while the costs are deferred to others at a later time (ibid: 40).

A learning in mindfulness, as characterised by consciousness and presence, promotes the slow and can contribute to sustainable learning, where non-violence, compassion and responsibility are natural parts of knowledge not measured in speed.

A Sustainable Learning

There is broad consensus on the need for further research on mindfulness. In the wealth of studies presented today about mindfulness, there are a number of deficiencies (Lanestrand 2012). There is a lack of an agreed definition of what mindfulness really is (Plank 2011). Many studies seem unclear as to what they actually seek to measure and study. In short the view of what mindfulness is varies depending on who the viewer is.

In my study (2012) I conclude with an attempt to describe mindfulness as a pedagogical tool. I see mindfulness as a learning process in awareness of the present with ethical dimensions beyond the utilitarian, which are characterised by learning through experience and sensation, combined with reflection and insight.
Langer (1997) uses the term mindful learning as a description of learning characterised by an open and inquisitive mind. Such a mind is innovative and aware that there is not only one correct answer. Langer echoes Dewey's (2009) criticism of the pedagogy in schools and education. Although they were writing at different times, they describe the same deficiencies. Both Rancière and Dewey (2009) state that children are disempowered when they are forced to study educational content that they have no interest in; Langer (1997) argues that finished truths are delivered to children and that as a result there is often a lack of commitment and motivation in schools.

Following Rancière’s argument nobody can really tell you all about mindfulness, you need to experience it yourself. And when you do, you experience it as self-awareness. In this way mindfulness contributes to sustainable learning, because it empowers people - when they learn how to learn by themselves to be themselves. In this way mindfulness contributes to our human potential with approaches and tools in educational contexts, to create conditions for a sustainable and truly empowering learning. Thus mindfulness:

- Makes us aware of the present, which is the only time we can be in – in the present we cannot run from the past nor hide in the future – instead we can develop responsibility and sustainability, here and now.
- Helps us feel the context and the wholeness, instead of separating life into parts.
- Helps us to connect to the value, the richness and happiness of life, which can give us the power and energy to handle sustainability challenges.
- Connects to ourselves so we can know our own will and use it as a base for our own learning and development as humans.
- Develops empathy with other people, which can lead to a wholeness and feeling of empathy and responsibility with people all around the world.
- Creates a learning climate characterised by self-awareness, which can help us see the consequences of our actions.
- Empowers people when they learn how to learn things by themselves.
- Reduces stress and strengthens health - which can help us feel better in body and soul, and make better decisions.

A sustainable learning is sustainable for the individual – where learning itself is the goal and the learning starts from the individual, extends to the community and where it fosters resilience and inclusivity. I argue that mindfulness in education can help teachers and children connect to one another and most importantly find their inner learning space and connection with their own potential. Of course mindfulness itself is not the only solution yet it can start a new kind of process in education - one which can lead to increased sustainability. Through the application of mindfulness in research, teaching and education there is clearly an opportunity for the development of a mindful and sustainable pedagogy.

References

Author
Lina Lanestrand is a pedagogue, writer and food-inspirer, currently working part-time as an organisational developer in health promotion at Riksförbundet Hälsofrämjandet www.halsoframjandet.se. Lina also runs the company www.linalanestrand.se with her husband, in which she gives courses and speeches about health and lifestyle. Lina is very interested in sustainable development and their company distributes locally grown organic vegetables in western Sweden. Lina previously worked with human rights and children’s rights with the nongovernmental organisation Save the Children, in Sweden. Lina has a focus on all children’s right to be involved in areas of life that affect them. She is currently creating a national adult education programme, sponsored by Save the Children Sweden, which focuses on the child’s right to be heard. The main issue in this is to help adults to really listen and to be truly present with kids.
Income and Happiness: Why isn’t research acted upon?

Chris Barker and Brian Martin

According to extensive research, greater income — above a basic minimum — has a relatively small impact on happiness. This finding has radical implications for individuals, groups and societies, yet is seldom considered in decision-making. We explore the reasons why the social and political implications of this research are not acted upon. We outline five arenas with potential obstacles to personal and institutional change responding to happiness-income research: lack of information; denigration of alternatives; contrary arguments; lack of authoritative endorsement; and structural conditions. Understanding the obstacles provides some guidance for efforts towards alternatives to the dominant economic model.

Research into the relationship between income and happiness, or between wealth and happiness, shows a consistent pattern: when income is above a basic minimum, further increases in income have a relatively small impact on perceptions of well-being (Easterbrook 2003; Frey and Stutzer 2002; Frey et al. 2008; Lane 2000; Layard 2005; Scitovsky 1976).

One of the striking findings from the research is that average self-rated happiness, or satisfaction with life, in entire countries has hardly changed over decades, despite significant increases in the per capita income. In essence, the country is getting richer but people aren’t getting any happier, on average (Frey and Stutzer 2002; Layard 2005). The modest increments in average happiness observed to be correlated with income may be due primarily to social comparison: those whose incomes increase, while peers’ incomes do not keep pace, are more satisfied because they are better off in comparison with others. This phenomenon can be referred to as a social limit to growth (Hirsch 1977) or more colloquially as a consequence of trying to keep up with the Joneses.

Cross-country comparisons of happiness levels show that people in impoverished countries are less likely to be happy, but there are striking inconsistencies, with some poorer countries showing higher happiness levels than richer ones. Comparing happiness levels between countries is problematic because of cultural differences. Our focus here is on affluent societies.

Researchers find that happiness is consistently increased by a range of thoughts and behaviours, including having personal relationships, expressing gratitude, being optimistic, entering a state of flow, being forgiving, helping others and being mindful (Lyubomirsky 2007; Seligman 2002). None of these factors depends heavily on a high material standard of living. One overall finding from happiness research is that external conditions such as income (and possessions, climate and good looks) have a relatively small impact on happiness compared to thoughts and behaviours.

This finding is potentially subversive. Many people strive for more money under the illusion that this will bring greater happiness, only to be continually frustrated. Although the capitalist system can increase the standard of living and improve welfare, it also fosters selfishness, acquisitiveness and inequality, none of which are conducive to happiness. Most governments try to promote economic growth and pay little attention to measures that might promote happiness at the expense of growth.

Happiness research shows there is an alternative to the usual ceaseless striving for money and power that preoccupies so many in business and government, as well as individuals. The question then arises: why isn’t this research acted upon? Our aim here is to outline some of the obstacles to significant personal and social change in directions that research suggests would increase happiness. We explore why it is that the limited interests of particularistic social groups are placed above the apparently universal goal of happiness.

In essence we are taking as given answers to the question of what makes people happy and looking instead at what is blocking action. To discuss obstacles to the uptake of happiness research findings, we canvass five arenas: information, values, arguments, credibility, and the exercise of power. These arenas are adapted from the
backfire model used by Martin (2007) and others. Martin observes that powerful groups deemed responsible for something seen as unfair or unjust — for example, censorship, police beatings, torture or massacres — commonly use five methods that inhibit public outrage: they cover up the action, devalue the targets, reinterpret what happened by lying, minimising, blaming and framing, use official channels like courts to give an appearance of justice, and intimidate or reward people involved. When these methods of outrage management fail, the injustice can backfire on the perpetrators. Here we adapt the models’ five methods of inhibiting outrage to be more generic, coming up with the five arenas of information, values, arguments, credibility, and the exercise of power.

We begin by spelling out some of the implications of income-happiness findings for individuals, groups and societies, asking what the world might be like if more people acted on the research. This sets the stage for analysing the obstacles to acting on income-happiness research findings.

### The Implications of Happiness Research for Economic Issues

What would the world look like if individuals and groups acted on happiness research? What are its implications for social and economic policy? Broadly speaking the research suggests that greater economic and social equality fosters happiness.

Since the 1980s, western governments have adopted neoliberal economic policies in pursuit of greater wealth. The pursuit of economic growth has been the holy grail of politicians and the benchmark against which electorates judge them. This economic growth has been accompanied, especially in English-speaking countries (Irvin 2008), by a dramatic rise in economic inequality which research suggests would reduce well-being (Wilkinson & Pickett 2009).

Frank (2007) argues that increasing economic inequality in the United States is lowering happiness for the majority of people. Conspicuous expenditure by the wealthy leads to efforts by those below them to upgrade their houses, cars, clothes and other possessions, in part to obtain advantages for their children. This leads to a number of behaviours with negative consequences for happiness, including longer working hours, longer commuting times and sleep deprivation.

In contrast, policies that advance equality and thus happiness would include progressive income and wealth taxes, health care and social aid to all sectors of society irrespective of income, generous educational and social support for the disadvantaged, and a wages policy that reduces income differentials.

Since the Global Financial Crisis of 2008–9, the large bonus payments made to bank executives have been the subject of public discussion, including outrage, most visibly in the Occupy movement. Research would suggest that the happiness of more people would be furthered by preventing such payments, not because this would make much material difference to the average person’s life, but because such bonuses increase perceptions of inequality.

Perhaps the strongest finding of happiness research is that social interaction and social cohesion, with their allied sense of belonging, are keys to happiness. This would suggest the need to reduce work hours so people can enjoy more time with their families and friends, and/or workplace changes to enable more satisfying social interaction on the job.

Many people work long hours in alienating jobs to earn more money to buy more things, in part because of the effectiveness of advertising in making them desire consumer goods. The issue is not so much that advertising persuades people to buy this or that item or brand but that it feeds the overall desire to acquire possessions. The irony is that those possessions are not likely to increase happiness in the long term. The implication is to use policy tools to limit advertising and reduce shopping hours (Gittins 2010).

Research suggests that social inclusiveness and participation are significant factors in increasing happiness. A society geared to that goal would surely seek to increase participation at work and in the community. Happiness, it can be argued (Pacek 2009; Phillips 1967; Stutzer & Frey 2006), is increased by democracy and vice versa. This includes greater involvement in decision making at work with flatter more participatory structures.

The policy directions suggested by happiness research are pretty much opposite to the broad neoliberal policies adopted in Australia, Britain and the US since the 1980s. Indeed, happiness research would suggest the need for equality-promoting social policies more vigorous than ever attempted by social democratic governments.

The implication of the research is that people would be much happier if society were organised rather differently than it is now. So what is preventing change towards a happier world? We now turn to obstacles to this sort of change, in five arenas: information, values, arguments, authority and power.

### Information

If people do not know about research findings concerning happiness and income, they are hardly able to act on them. To begin an analysis of obstacles to acting on...
happiness research findings, the first step is to look at access to information.

The research is hardly a secret. It is openly published, readily available for anyone who wants to look for it. Furthermore, in the past decade a huge number of popular books about happiness have been published, many of them reporting findings about income, in turn fuelling popular media reports. However, this information is set within an environment that is not conducive to its positive reception.

An overwhelming amount of information, especially in the media, contains the traditional message that more money is good for people. Newspapers contain entire sections on business, and finance stories are often published as breaking news. On television, the state of the economy is a mainstay of news and current affairs reporting, with the implicit assumption that economic growth is good for everyone.

As well as looking at availability of information, it is also necessary to examine the wider information environment. There is an overwhelming amount of material, especially in the media, containing the traditional message that more money is good for people. Newspapers contain entire sections on business, and finance stories are often published as breaking news. On television, the state of the economy is a mainstay of news and current affairs reporting, with the implicit assumption that economic growth is good for everyone.

Even more pervasive is advertising, a large proportion of which is about the value of buying things. The aim of much advertising is to make people dissatisfied with themselves and their lives — this is hardly conducive to happiness — for which the solution is purchasing a product or service. Consumerism is also reinforced through shopping malls and displays of consumption by neighbours and friends, for example houses, cars, clothes and electronic gadgets (Miles 1998).

In this wider information context, happiness research findings have a low profile. This can be made more obvious by imagining a different sort of information environment in which happiness outcomes are trumpeted on the front pages of newspapers while economic growth figures are relegated to a small lifestyle feature. Imagine a world in which people regularly visit palatial well-being emporiums but purchase material necessities in plain unadorned shops.

The voluntary simplicity movement has been around for decades (Simple Living Collective 1977); E. F. Schumacher (1973: 48–56) wrote about Buddhist economics, a combination of simplicity and nonviolence. However, few people know about voluntary simplicity. They are much more familiar with fashionable brands of food, clothing and cars. Voluntary simplicity might be a more reliable path to happiness than consumerism, but few people receive equal amounts of information about these options.

In summary, happiness research findings are readily available and media stories have even made some findings widely accessible, but even so the information environment is still overwhelmingly tilted towards consumerism. Happiness researchers and popularisers are adding their contributions, but have seldom joined forces with those challenging the overwhelming consumerist-oriented information environment.

Values

One of the exciting aspects of happiness research is that it provides empirical evidence about actions that help make people happier. However evidence alone is not enough: needed as well is a politics of happiness that can create a new vision for living — a new language of economics and politics — deploying empirical research evidence in support of values and ways of life that increase happiness.

The first value of a politics of happiness is the value of happiness itself. Most people say they want to be happy. Happiness can therefore be taken as a core value of our culture. And yet many people do things, such as working long hours in an alienating job away from family and friends that research says are unlikely to increase it. People often interpret happiness as meaning short-term pleasure, whereas research suggests that long-term contentment is more likely to be found in meaningful activities. Valuing happiness then requires a shift in perspective whereby people value, for example, relationships over work and money, the need for which is driven by consumption habits — and act accordingly. Happiness research suggests the need for a simpler life involving fewer consumer goods and more time with family and friends.

The problem is that affluent people live for the most part in promotional cultures (Wernick 1991) that seek to sell happiness in the shape of a new car or a large-screen television. Acculturation teaches the value of owning things; contemporary media culture is filled with signs of consumption (Crook et al. 1992). People don’t have to be told to buy things to be happy because the message is implicit in the symbol environment.

Happiness research, to have an impact, needs to resonate with people’s values. The problem is that values are shaped by the surrounding society, notably its consumerist features. However, given that most people say they want to be happy, “happiness promotion” could argue for radical
change in social and economic policy on the grounds that it furthers cultural values.

Counter-arguments

In the category “arguments” we include both logical challenges to happiness research findings and other ways of contesting the results. At the more logical end of the spectrum are a number of critics of positive psychology. For example, Barbara Ehrenreich (2009: 147–176) in her book *Bright-Sided* argues that happiness researchers have hyped their findings in an unscientific way and that a number of the findings are not as well supported as suggested. However, the number of people familiar with criticisms by Ehrenreich and others is so small that it cannot be held accountable for the lack of action in relation to happiness research.

Of much greater significance are ad hoc ways of dismissing happiness research, usually developed to be able to justify rejecting the findings without serious engagement with them. Dismissal through anecdote appears to be common. By citing a single apparently happy rich person, or the suicide rate in some country, the body of findings can be ignored. Then there is the joking approach. In response to the claim that “You don’t need to be rich to be happy,” a listener might respond “I’d rather be rich and unhappy than poor and unhappy.” Because people have their own experiences of happiness and unhappiness, they are less likely to treat research findings as authoritative, especially when they conflict with personal observations, compared to research in less familiar areas such as electrical engineering or Serbian linguistics.

Our comments here are based on conversations with friends and our casual experience with the media. To our knowledge, no one has systematically examined either logical or informal ways of responding to happiness research findings — this is an area that needs much more study. Our guess is that the embedding of pro-growth thinking as cultural common sense impedes change more than shortcomings of the research or any particular criticisms of it.

Authority and Credibility

Happiness researchers have considerable credibility through their credentials and scholarly achievements, but few have positions with formal decision-making power. In the wider society, most authority figures support the conventional economic agenda. Leading politicians and business leaders almost uniformly encourage a preoccupation with economic growth, jobs and profits. The only government to endorse a happiness agenda has been that of Bhutan, hardly an influential player internationally.

Even more important for most people are authority figures in their own lives. For those working in organisations, bosses are crucial. If the boss sets an example of emphasising happiness over efficiency or profits — either for workers or customers — this undoubtedly has an impact, but very few bosses are able or willing to take such a stand. More commonly, they emphasise profit, efficiency and competitiveness, often at the expense of relationship-building, gratitude and other factors conducive to well-being.

Friends, co-workers and neighbours are also influential. They provide “social proof” concerning lifestyle choices such as housing, transport, clothes and leisure. If enough friends start making different choices, this can be highly influential. The potential exists for a life oriented to different values.

There are some authority figures with a different message. Traditionally, some religious leaders have emphasised spiritual virtues rather than material success. But this challenge has been muted, with most mainstream religious organisations adapting their message and behaviour to be compatible with standard economic growth. In the US, some evangelical Christian leaders proclaim that seeking wealth is quite compatible with salvation (Ehrenreich 2009: 123–146). It would seem that overall the influence of religious and spiritual values that promote love, gratitude, social care and other pro-happiness values has declined.

Power

The move to a simpler happier society driven less by consumerist imperatives is opposed by power in a number of forms. Sometimes power is exercised overtly, but in many cases power relations are built into social arrangements that benefit privileged groups, so people misperceive what would be, according to research, in their interests (on the faces of power, see Lukes 1974).

In consumer societies, powerful corporate interests and media organisations fill the culture with signs and messages that promote consumer spending (Barker 1997; Mattelart & Mattelart 1992). Although audiences are active and knowledgeable in relation to media practices (see for example Liebes & Katz 1991; Morley 1992), this activity does not necessarily prevent them from adopting the values they see enacted with the media. The media are a site for a struggle over values, but one largely stacked against happiness.

The power structures of contemporary society provide few opportunities for living simply or reducing commitments to paid employment. For example, happiness research with its stress on the importance of social interaction...
suggests the value of “cohousing” projects that design collective living spaces that maximise interaction (McCamant & Durrett 1994). Cohousing models involve private ownership — they are not communes — but they do involve community commitment and a degree of communal land ownership. They are intentional communities. Private building corporations do not promote cohousing; they are more interested in separate dwellings. In most countries, building regulations obstruct rather than promote cohousing.

Perhaps the deepest source of resistance to change is the huge social investment in physical infrastructure and human skills, including housing, agriculture, transport, factories, security, trade and financial services. In these and other sectors, the current way of doing things is built into technological systems and in learned human capacities and modes of interaction. In that context, those with a heavy stake in current social arrangements would see a major decline in consumer spending as a crisis to be solved, not a reflection of the wise pursuit of well-being.

Social movements for greater economic equality have the potential to increase happiness levels, but they may be opposed with the full force of the state. Governments support private property at the expense of equality: squatters are evicted from vacant properties and indebted farmers evicted from their land. Radical workers’ movements have been strongly opposed by owners and governments (Root & Branch 1975); when workers seek to take over running of workplaces, they are subject to attack (Hunnius et al. 1973). Attempts to develop local economies, including setting up local currencies (Douthwaite 1996), are regularly sabotaged by central governments.

In short, power is often exercised against the promotion of happiness when this challenges vested interests.

**Conclusion: Towards a Happiness Social Movement**

Most people want to be happy and there is substantial empirical research that shows how to be happier. This research suggests that the contemporary stress on economic growth and social inequality does little to increase average happiness, and that policies promoting equality, social interaction, relationships and thus happiness are sidelined. We have suggested a number of reasons for this: lack of information, adoption of values that run counter to happiness, the adoption of neoliberal economic thinking as common sense, the lack of cultural credibility given to happiness research, and the operations of power.

A common assumption is that the solution lies in bringing about change in government policies (Bok, 2010; Layard 2005). However, governments have a heavy stake in many policies that inhibit improvements in happiness. They have a vested interest in continued economic growth because it provides the basis, through taxes, for the existence and power of the state, and hence are susceptible to corporate lobbying. So, although government policy is undoubtedly important, it should not be assumed that convincing politicians is an effective way to bring about change.

When mainstream institutions are unreceptive to alternative agendas, change can be promoted by social movements. However, at present there are only inklings of a separate happiness social movement. Perhaps more promising is to link happiness activism with other campaigns, such as for simplicity, co-housing, community gardens, yoga, and, more generally, self-reliance (Galtung et al. 1980). People involved in these sorts of areas are more likely to be receptive to ideas from happiness research and can translate the ideas into everyday practices or campaigning skills relevant to the issue or focus.

Another option is to link happiness research ideas to campaigns with a more critical orientation to consumer society, for example culture jamming (Lasn 1999). Campaigns with supportive group dynamics, a humorous component and a positive attitude are more likely to attract participants. Research offers ideas for what might be called happy campaigning, which can be targeted, in part, towards creating a world that supports happiness-promoting practices.

These ideas are necessarily preliminary because there has been little discussion, much less research, on building a happiness-oriented social movement. By outlining obstacles to taking seriously research on income and happiness, we have indicated some possible arenas for action. In the future, much will be learned by analysing and reflecting on practices, campaigns and outcomes.

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Life sharpens my cutlass mind
Jag ged in its preliminary grind.
It’s a tool and close combat weapon
Cutting through queer - racist deception.

JULES NYX
ALBERTA, CANADA
This article examines the German translations of Jeannie Gunn’s *The Little Black Princess* (1905) (*Die kleine schwarze Prinzessin*, 2010) and William Peasley’s *The Last of the Nomads* (1982) (*Die letzten Nomaden*, 2007). The focus rests on the translation of Australian historical and political contexts into the foreign context of German target culture. It argues that the specifics of inter-racial Australian history evident in the two books have been rendered invisible, without the very contexts having completely disappeared. Rather, the translations have reproduced Australian racisms and German ideas of Aboriginal authenticity and traditionalism, as reflected in the notions of the harmonious Naturvolk (natural people). Both translations, the article ultimately contends, testify to the persistency of German ideas of Aboriginal Australia, construing Aboriginal people as timeless, unchanging and pre-modern.

Germans seem to be obsessed with Aboriginal Australians: Germany is the largest market for Aboriginal art in Europe, and no other European country has produced as many translations of Aboriginal literature as Germany. Studies of the German reception of Aboriginal-related literatures constitute a relatively new yet burgeoning field, including literary analyses of translated Aboriginal texts, studies of the marketing of German translations, teaching Aboriginal literature in German classrooms and bibliographies of translations (Brewster, 2009; Gerber, 2007; name removed for the peer review process). Most of these studies concentrate on techniques of rendering intelligible the contexts of Australian culture for a German-speaking readership.

Little, however, is known about the ways in which historical and political contexts, especially interracial history and racism, are made intelligible in German translations of Aboriginal-related literature. The present article examines the ways in which interracial Australian history has been translated. The translation of interracial history, I argue, does not merely require an explanation of the historical contexts of the source text but also one of the historical contexts of the target text, in this event, the explanation of both interracial history within Australia and the history of German perceptions of Aboriginal Australians.

Drawing on Jeannie (Mrs Aeneas) Gunn’s *Die kleine schwarze Prinzessin* (2010) (original title: *The Little Black Princess*, 1905) and William Peasley’s *Die letzten Nomaden* (2007) (original title: *The Last of the Nomads*, 1982), the present study demonstrates that interracial history and the history of German perceptions of Aboriginal Australians have been rendered seemingly invisible in the German translations. Yet instead of having been completely erased, the historical contexts have been left in palimpsests ‘overwritten’ by the use of seemingly neutral terminologies and German ideas of Aboriginal authenticity. Both texts are thus a good source not only for examining how the historical contexts of the stories have been translated but also for inferring the persisting nature of German interest in Aboriginal Australians.

What makes the two books worthwhile for comparison is their focus on Aboriginal ‘traditionalism’. Moreover, both translations have been published by the same publishing house, a Leipzig-based company which focuses on German and Aboriginal-related literature. Both books have been issued almost contemporaneously (2007 and 2010) and advertised as ‘Aboriginal literature’ in stark contrast to Aboriginal self-definitions according to which Aboriginal literature needs to be either authored or co-authored by an Aboriginal person in order be designated as ‘Aboriginal’.

As this article argues, both translations reveal the power of perceived authenticity on the politics of German publishing of Aboriginal-related literature. This article will first elaborate on how the historical contexts of the source texts have been made invisible and then discuss to what extent the two translations represent the persisting nature of German interest in Aboriginal cultures. All translations from German into English are the author’s.

**Omitting History in Historical Texts**

The translation of the texts has resulted in an omission of their historical contexts. In *The Last of the Nomads*, the translation has remained close to the original. The
following passage shows the idiomatic translation, as employed throughout the text:

They reached the low hills of Kata Kata and turned to the north-west to enter the land of the Budidjara. Mudjon followed, past Paragoodingu rock hole and on towards the permanent water at Moongooloo. Early one morning he cautiously approached a waterhole situated in an area of low gravelly undulations, with scattered mulga trees providing shelter for anyone camping near the water. This was the rock hole known as Birrill, deep in Budidjara country (1982: 16–17).

This passage has been translated thus:


In English, the translated passage reads as follows:

Finally, they reached the hills of Kata Kata and turned to the north-west direction where the area of the Budidjara began. Mudjon followed them. He passed the rock cave Paragoodingu and approached the waters near Moongooloo. Early one morning, he approached cautiously a waterhole, which was situated in an area full of pebble stone hills. Here and there, Mulga trees stretched into the heights and offered protection for everyone who took up his camp near the water. This was the rock hole Birrill, which was situated deep in the interior of the area of the Budidjara.

The German translation has preserved all Aboriginal place names and has departed only in a few instances from the original. Conspicuously, the central term ‘land’ has been given as ‘area’ which has a different connotation from ‘land’: the former is seen as a place without necessarily denoting the ownership of the very place, whereas the term ‘land’ would have emphasised the ownership and not merely the inhabitation of the respective land. Another difficulty rests with the enumeration of different place names which, without any contextualisation, makes little sense for German-speaking readers: in the original, the detailed description of places illuminates the history and cultural ownership associated with these places. In the translation, lacking any proper contextualisation, the description of geographical names renders impossible any association of places with history and culture but merely denotes the listing of names. The cultural and historical significance of the very passage is thus being lost in translation, ironically because of the direct method employed in the translation which would have necessitated establishing of the cultural and historical contexts in question.

The translation of *The Little Black Princess* is more problematic. There are debates in Australia as to whether the portrayal of Aboriginal people in the book can be termed—in hindsight—as racist (Ellinghaus, 1997; Larbalestier, 1990). Mirroring the racial discourses at the time of its production, the book describes Aboriginal Australians paternalistically as good natured yet childlike. The German translation has maintained the unidiomatic language style and most racist terms, such as ‘lubra’ and ‘piccaninny’, have been left as in the original. The meaning of these terms is not widely known among German speakers. Rather, in German, the diminutive form of ‘piccaninny’ has the ring of ‘cuteness’ and harmlessness, reminiscent of children’s language. Significantly, only the term ‘nigger’ has been replaced by *Eingeborene* (natives) which, however, is outdated and carries a colonialist denotation.

The dust cover of the German translation directly addresses readers with the informal personal pronoun du which is usually used either for children or for close friends. Thus, the book is overtly advertised as a children’s book, containing no explanatory references to its contexts of production as well as racist terminologies. The source text is simply copied into German as if there had not been a century lying between the original text and its translation. The following paragraph illustrates this historically insensitive translation:

Bett-Bett must have been a Princess...she didn’t sit—like fairy-book princesses—waving golden sceptres over devoted subjects, for she was just a little bush nigger girl or “lubra”, about eight years old. (1905: 1)

This opening paragraph has been rendered into German thus:

Bett-Bett war bestimmt eine Prinzessin... allerdings saß sie nicht auf einem Thron, wie das Märchenprinzessinnen zu tun pflegten, und sie schwang auch kein goldenes Zepter über die Häupter ihrer ergebenen Untertanen. Sie war nur ein schwarzes Mädchen, eine kleine Lubra aus dem Busch und sie zählte ungefähr acht Jahre. (2010: 7)

THE GERMAN TRANSLATION thus reproduces not only a paternalistic discourse of the early twentieth century but also aggravates racial stereotypes by trivialising them from their historical context into a present one. Thus, in the German translation, history has been omitted. Yet it has far from disappeared: early twentieth-century racism has become alive through a careless and dilettantish translation.

PERSISTING INTEREST IN ABORIGINAL AUTHENTICITY

Historically, German interest in Aboriginal cultures is characterised by the persistency of Aboriginal ‘authenticity’, encompassing German ideas of Naturvolk (natural people). The term Naturvolk was coined by Johann Gottfried Herder in the late eighteenth century to designate a people thought to live in a state of nature without governmental constitution and thus culture (LÖCHTE, 2005: 100). The concept of Naturvolk also encompassed Aboriginal Australians and is nowadays largely banned from academic parlance. Despite construing Indigenous people as unchanging and devoid of civilisation, the idea of Naturvolk did not necessarily have a devaluing connotation. In contrast, Naturvölker were often, but not always, glorified as healthy and pristine races, thus used as a trope to criticise the scours of German civilisation (Dürbeck, 2008: 173). The imagination of the unspoilt Naturvölker drew on ideas of Indigenous authenticity which portrayed Indigenous peoples as diametrically opposed to German civilisation and thus perforce as pre-modern, pre-industrialised and ‘traditional’. What Kevin Keeffe has termed ‘Aboriginality-as-persistence’ (1992: 46–52), a perception of Aboriginal cultures distinguished by unchanging cultural continuity, corresponds, although slightly different, to the very German idea of the traditional Naturvolk.

The romantic idea of Naturvolk, this study contends, is not part of a past discourse. It can still be discerned in the two translations under study. This becomes less obvious in the modes of translation than in the nature of both stories. The Little Black Princess is outdated and evokes interest in historical rather than current representations of Aboriginal cultures. Once heralded as a classic of Australian children’s literature, it had seen re-publications and re-editions especially during the 1930s and 1970s, but the number of re-editions petered out in the early 1980s, with the last re-publication appearing in 1987. That the German publisher still deemed the book marketable in the year 2010 is less astonishing than it first appears, but it can be explained with reference to its accounts of seemingly traditional Aboriginal themes. In the afterword, Gunn’s observation of Territory culture is, after all, described as a true account of a people that is conceived of as diametrically opposed to Europeans and linked to nature:

The present book is the first authentic report published on the odd mores and customs of the Australian Aborigines. It was written more than a hundred years ago…but lost nothing of its initial value and freshness…it was possible for her [Gunn] to give us insight into a world that is completely alien and fascinating for us...There are only few communities in remote areas who can live their rituals and Dreamings. But what actually is this Dreaming? It describes an intense physical, emotional and spiritual interaction with magical places in their land in order to bring the past into the present so that the future can take place. Only those people can dream who are born into this landscape and are part of this landscape and nature. (Gunn, 2010: 120, 124–125)

Aboriginal Australians here are portrayed in line with the German conceptions of a Naturvolk that had still preserved its innate traditional relationship with nature. Gunn’s story is praised as a true account even for the current understanding of Territory cultures. It takes on discourses that equate Aboriginal authenticity with remote communities which are seen as the only communities that had maintained traditional heritage, thereby implicitly excluding urban Aboriginal people from the status of ‘true’ Aboriginality. The vagueness and romantic undertone in the explanation of ‘Dreaming’ and the idea of ‘being part of nature’ further cater to German ideas of Naturvolk, negating any cultural expression outside the realm of nature.

In German, the term Natur (nature) has the meaning of an antipode to everything that has not been shaped
Die letzten Nomaden caters in a similar fashion to German discourses of Aboriginal authenticity. The book tells of the rescue of a couple regarded to have been the last members of the Mandildjara to lead a nomadic life. In this event, the notions of a Naturvolk are forged through indirect reference to ‘traditional’ Aboriginality. The emphasis on the last of the nomads represents Aboriginal people as being part of the past and again caters to an interest in the original and pure. Significantly, the book closes with the words, ‘Ein Kapitel der australischen Geschichte war abgeschlossen, eine Ära war zu Ende gegangen’ (167), meaning that with the end of the last nomads, ‘a chapter in Australian history drew to a close, an era came to an end’. While this may have been the case with the two protagonists, the trope of the ‘last people’ nonetheless implicates notions of a vanishing race, representing Aboriginal cultures as a fixed and essentialist category (Birch 1993; Lattas 1993).

No text is free of its socio-historical contexts. As it stands, the translation of The Last of the Nomads reciprocates the ideas of ‘true’ Aboriginality as rooted in a pre-contact past which is perceived explicitly as vanished (‘a chapter drew to a close’, ‘the last of the nomads’). Although the original story relates this cultural change to the two protagonists and the Mandildjara, the German translation does not contextualise the alteration of Mandildjara culture as a process of partial change but speaks of a complete vanishing of an entire culture. Lacking any proper explanation of the policies of assimilation, dying race dogma and European ideas of Aboriginal traditionalism, the theme of the last nomads becomes conferred upon Aboriginal cultures as such, suggesting the association of the last nomad with the ‘last’ and ‘true’ Aboriginal.

Die letzten Nomaden does more than reproduce the original story of the Mandildjara but construes the very German idea of a once harmonious yet dead Naturvolk. As the text suggests, German-speaking readers can only lament the inexcusable triumph of civilisation, but they can rest assured: the seemingly harmonious and idyllic life has to yield, cannot be resurrected. Civilisation, the subtext comforts, at least has a future.

German interest in Aboriginal cultures has been the strongest in Europe and evinced a considerable tenaciousness to reproduce ideas of Aboriginal traditionalism, timelessness and harmonious relations to nature, all reflecting the persisting idea of Naturvolk. This persistency not only takes away the complexity, fluidity and dynamic nature of Aboriginal cultures but also reproduces images of a dying race, passivity and racial backwardness. German interest in Aboriginal cultures, well intentioned as it seems, is still permeated with prejudice.

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Oliver Haag is a Research Fellow at the Austrian Center for Transcultural Studies, Vienna, and is also affiliated with the University of Edinburgh where he is teaching in European History. His research interests are in the areas of German reception of Indigenous cultures, the history of publishing, and Australian Indigenous autobiography. Oliver has published on these subjects in, among others, Aboriginal History, National Identities and Studies in Australasian Cinema. His current research is entitled ‘Indigenous People and National Socialism’. Contact: ohaag@staffmail.ed.ac.uk

Blackbird

( in memory of Gwen Harwood, who encouraged the eleven-year-old me to write poetry
after her poem of the same name)

In the morning my blackbird sings

"Believe in the Trinity."

In the evening he seems to say

"Abandon all property."

Song, faith and ethics from one beak — what a divinity!

STUART BARNES,
CLIFTON HILL, VICTORIA

The Tale of Coxcomb

JOEI VON MAGIUS

The fairy tale has been re-visioned in this narrative and draws its inspiration from A.S. Byatt's Little Black Book of Stories and Murray Bail's Eucalyptus. My intention is to explore female sexuality, to manipulate time and to build abstract linguistic landscapes through metafiction and story-telling. I have opted for an undulating and canorous language that blends Old English, French, Italian, German, Joyce-ian language, colloquialisms and my own language re-inventions to evoke a novel and innovative sense of voice. I quote directly from James Joyce and from his 1920 novel, Ulysses, in two sections of this tale. It is very much an oral tale and best spæk out loud with frenzy and fervour.

Once upon a time, long paes, I told a tale the usual way. Yes-sir-ee. Once upon a tick-tock clock, I reduced all the complexities of life, love and kitchenware to one neat and tidy tail-less tale. Perché? Why because it is so much more satisfying to tie the ends up tightly.

Perhaps I stole fibres, textures, patches, warmth or the very quiet from somebody else’s fragmented bed; stole recipes, ingredients and even the pots and pans from another concoction-cooking woman’s happy story. I tæk an integral tale from the tail of a man, front-to-back cover; and I didn’t mind at all. No-sir-ee.

In a time that is not now, not the future but not too long-paes, I evoked a sense of morality and wholeness within myself, or at least mackly convinced others—people from far-far-away grund—of a virtuous and fecund lady, a daughter at that! And spæk with a silver tongue of her quandaries and quests of storyhood.

I convinced and deceived and de-evinced and conceived; through reinterpretations, reproductions and re-exceptions to the rules of story telling, reality telling and all whet-whelmed-while, that me-telling. The incredible thing is that my protagonist was always me.


Vociferous, voluptuous and visceral, Yes-sir-ee. Vaunting, vacant and vain … Let us not tarry now, over petty details. No-sir-ee. Let us sharpen the knives in our own kitchen drawers before quality rusts and ruins.

Seld anoveward un whilom—or, once upon a time, if you prefer it—the words we used were different. Words can be traced from here to yonder, further and there, and everywhere intermittent. Snatchy, pauseful, seld and up between-whiles—yes-sir-ee, sometimes—words, just, don’t, make, sense. They can be lithe-limbed, stretching and as unbehovely as mine pursuits; yet this is a semless and temmeless tale, so you will get the hank. This wretched hag—this dried, decrepit glass-gazer—she’s been snatching, collating, collecting and gluing … lingue:
To make you believe.

There once was ein offendress. Yes-sir-ee, a nymph! She was spæk of all over the land as a grievancer, a sprittenly nubile and a coxcombic tail pincher. She tæk the tongues of those plurable prized princes and etten them one by one. Each prince was rye to impart their tongue and lingue for her; in hope to become a better story than each already, precious, was. The more she etten, the more gain she spindled; and as each lingue left off, the tales of princes dwindled. No more would yen hear of honour and faith and royalty. No-sir-ee. Only men’s mute mouths and bitter queens were left. Those bitter queens were bitter. They would say, ‘Look at that mack minstrel whore; pearls before swine! And swirls before pine! Non si amore,’ and with their heads.

‘Don’t spill your cuppa. This book’s very old. Ancient. I hailed it from some hag down at the book exchange.’

‘I gave her my word, or words at that; I spæk in every lingue. I said I would keep the story tethered—that I would be the gumption and the glue—and that I would believe.’

‘True story?’

‘She told me how to say “hello young prince” in Japanese and Russian. She showed me some hefty callouses too.’ I bare my red hands to all.

‘You’ve lost me.’

‘Yes … oui oui, I have. Mind your tiresome eye to this here cypher. Sealed with haige and ink, with wrought irony, a temrless stamp from the printing press, and so we begin …’

I believe. I wouldn’t buy it if I didn’t believe. But that, by my eye to your lovely eye, is one helluva prize we set our sight upon.

And if the prize doesn’t break in the first two weeks—if it does mostly like its advertisement said it would, and if we find a place it fits … where perhaps now it would be empty without—well, then I say we got ourselves a bargain. And if it keeps on gleaming, maybe getting a bit grubby from temmte to temmte, but keeps on doing or being something we can talk about or smile about—hell, brag about—maybe for twenty-five years, even, then its something worth clutching. Most things don’t last that long anymore. Cars, marriages, china, electronics—even books with their bad glue—bad glue can earthly be a grim ending to a fairy tale.

I was strong with a man’s story in my belly. I met him at a palace in Prague where he was carting bundles of hens in a big red wheelbarrow with a small dark cloud following, above his head. I remember being taken aback at his cartoonish brow and thought I had better get a grim grasp of his lingue. I hardly thought ‘meh’ but then there we were, carousing under a Czechered night sky. I tæk not a word from him. He never spæk and we could not find a common lingue. Instead, he returned to his bundles of hens, lighter, and the little dark cloud now swelled and danced a wordless dance in my belly; a story to last twenty-five years.

Strolling strong, fat and wide, through Big W, aisle nine, with mine mata by my side, I heard the sweet sound of love beckoning. The lady spæk of ‘forever’ and ‘sharpness’ and ‘flexibility’; and it was not just one, but three, plus a special for today, take home two of these and this one here. What a bargain.

Strong. Yes-sir-ee. This day I allowed myself to be mesmerised by the woman selling shiny love at the stand. She pulled me forth on a tight warm rope and the air became so thick you could slice it. I looked back to where I might spy Mata, felt the numb tugging of one perpetual umbilical cord that stretched with each step forward I tæk; and there I spied myriad bonds frapping and flying, endless ends wrapping about every infant, every biddy, every man. I wondered at the new bonds billing in my belly and of the cord cutters of time pæs. A huddle of crones, pulled and pooled, had wound up all bound up at the stand. Not listening but looking for someone to talk to—about their fantastic pianist, great-grand-niece, Claire, or their wood carving son in law, Steven—and while I’d heard these stories so many temmes afore, there was an ancient, primal electricity buzzing from our genes, shawls, nighties, perms, wristwatches and bags.

Bags we clutched like love.

Strong. Yes-sir-ee. Finalmente I went against the inner critic of mine mata, and knew I would have to contend with the outer critic when she whisked efficiently out of my sight. ‘Mata, all calloused and large, brandishing your blunted Social Alternatives Vol. 31 No 4, 2012 73
like a fairy tale; yet how true to the tale that this tail is tied

I met this prince—can you believe it? It almost sounds

a prince! And a scholar at that! And it's a fine thing that

Upon chance, I met this friend of a friend of mine—what

fetter; I swore not to let that outer critic, Mata, in.

hoopsa!

quickening and wombfruit.

time too; you must choose keenly, the sharpest words,

never told me how the story could end better than it

hæve for you. Invest, invest. Love takes time but gives
time too; you must choose keenly, the sharpest words,

for your story.

Send us, bright one, light one, Horhorn, quickening and wombfruit.

Hoopsa boyaboy, hoopsa! Hoopsa boyaboy, hoopsa!

I held a new babe in my arms and promised not to

Except ...

... maybe the inner Mata curbed my future investments.

Because, yes-sir-ee, I changed my idea on the value, the

price, what I could expect and what I couldn't. Still-bound
to mine mata, I frapped and wrapped; I were trapped.

Veined and vaunted, I began to steal love.

I became the spill—il caffè versato; the splash—la
spruzzata di vino; the stain—l'acqua macchia ... which
made that bad glue come unstuck. Selfish. Syphic.
Sateless. And it wasn't in fluorescent shopping centres
or any place that love bounced off perms and shawls and
bags. No-sir-ee. This was a place where the wristwatches
only refracted borrowed time.

Batflight. Alley time. Darkmans. All married time. A temme
where queens were beheaded and witches swarm.

Boyaboys—like Mata's—never came free. If,
perchance, there was purchase, they were returned
sharp and quickly. Yes-sir-ee. And the stories, perchance,
perchased, I stole: I kept them for long temmes. I had no
receipt, no stamp, no proof of purchase, and their worth to
me was to held 'em, right by my undine side, sempiternally.

Che disastro! See how I enjeopard the story? Each
prince is man and man is dead. Mute. Mangled. Merde.
... Maataa! ... What have I done? What am I, but you? A
singer of stolen songs, stealthed and lonely, tied to this
relentless, reticulated, pulsating story that you are my
mother. No! I must forhabben. I must find some glue. I
must give lingue back to the princies and honey back to
the queens.

I am mother now.

So then it is, I gave and gæve words—all about the
grund—of my de-evinced conceptions and convinced
deceptions. I sliced those bonds, those binds, those lies;
proven, shapen, unfettered from tales and ties.

Then it was that I heard from a friend of a friend of
mine, that some glue really sticks. So long as you're real
careful not to spill or spoil their story. Truth is, you must
believe in their story—you must believe.

Upon chance, I met this friend of a friend of mine—what
a prince! And a scholar at that! And it's a fine thing that
I met this prince—can you believe it? It almost sounds
like a fairy tale; yet how true to the tale that this tail is tied
tight to a queen? Oh his tail was fine and his tales are too.
He has stories swimming swanny in every grund. He is
immutable to stealth or robbery; and his tongue cannot
be taek. Sacrosanct.

And these are the words he imparts, gifts, freely:

While you have a thing it can be taken from you ... but
when you give it, you have given it. No robber can take
it from you. It is yours then forever when you have given
it. It will be yours always. That is to give.

Allora. I've been gammin—this knowledge here I didn't
need to borrow or steal, no-sir-ee—I have seen too many
people in the dark that you see only between sun and sun.
And I loved them in the nox and I kinda liked them in the
sunshine, too. But etten them up, I could not.

Without vip nor worship, dreed ded are the grunds, mute
and mangled are the men, bitter-barren are the queens
and so sad is mine tale's tail. Spill forth, cut swiftly, hold
gently; make fecund each grund.

'Gammin ... long temmes paes ... shile whilom ... robbery ...'

'You're shaking. What's wrong?'

'That hag; she's telling my story. She's telling me off in
her crazy tongue—calling me a Horhorn, whatever that
means—I'm sure I get the hank of it.'

'How d'you know?'

'I'm always the protagonist in the story.' I bare my
calledous, red hands to all.

You looked at me quizzically, as a page fell from the
ancient book.

I had to stop to question where I was headed with this
story. As a future scholar, and someone who believed in
fairy tales, I had to dight this business. A dighting scholar!
No peevish task, but yes-sir-ee I will, might, did, and well-
would. How must my words make myself understand and
stood?

I've gotten well beyond myself now; the time is nox and
I've forgotten the simplest of words. The tales are getting
loose-ish and frightfully selfish.

Yes-sir-ee, I returned to Paris from whence I'd spied
that awe-full, eye-filling tower. Once upon a sight-seeing,
I'd grasped that whole Eiffel in one, red, bare, calledous
hand; and I spent its spokes and strokes with honey. Oui
oui, yes-sir-ee, I admit!

Yet this time round-and-around I gæve it back my
raison d'être and it vacuumed me of all the scanty
Francese I ever spæk.

My yield, I yeld it back, so mind mine French.

'Once I gæve a wanton fuck, but here now I am to
giften it back. I wash my hands of this misguided matter.
Vous le reprendre, vous les émasculé.'

That pillar quivered with glee as honey speld free;
I watched on as Parisian princies rushed forth over
saccharine grund—not vasectomised, but vigorous—to
fertile femme, them honeyed queens. Like buzzing hives,
those kitchens moaned in unisons of sopranos and tenors.

I heard a slicing sharp snap and felled to the grund with a smack. The cut cord of Mata’s malediction went slack. And now, or then, I stood up mineself and stared; dumb and as impenetrable as the lingue I’d once sought and savoured. With tail between legs, I scamped back to mine home grund.

To make amends—to spell real tears for grandmother’s hands—to look mine conquests in lovely eyes and each sole-self cry. ‘Sorry’ cries I, I hold; sorry honey, held I.

Sorry.

‘It’s felled apart as we spæk.’

‘The book?’

‘Yes. Some of these pages will never be put back right, regardless of my glue. But I like it.’

‘How so?’

‘The story is complicated; it keeps changing.’

‘So too do you. You’re not talking gibberish anymore.’

‘Hmm,’ I turn my bare hands about, ‘I believe I’ve stopped doing that.’ I stare at them, palm-side up, for some etching, some meaning in their lines, a clue as to how my story ends, ‘I believe’ I bare my one bare hand to all.

Arvethlich and I tarry. I seek a common language, a common truth. I must carry the story, sharpen my words, and hope you get the hank. And I must produce some glue.

Once, inside the clawing womb of the opera, I listened as a mother’s tears sang of love and loss; her language spelled through me, swelled, yeld as it telled me.

Hand in hennaed hand; I saw men and women walk this land. I heard the songs of all my great aunties; the songs of mothers, of bonds, of scholars, of princes—the ones that you will believe. There have been stories long pæs, the ones mine Mata never selled me. They struck and stung, they skelled me, yet held and held and held me.

Funnily enough, I understood it all. I wept.

I giften you—my womb, my words; wistgifende—my world.

01.04.04.06 (adj.) Fertile land/place
berende OE • eacniende OE • væstmbærende OE • wistful OE • wistgifende OE • wridende OE • good-god OE; 1328 • plenteve c1330 • fat 1393- • bearing c1420- • fertile 1460 • fructual 1528; 1629 • batwell 1534 • battle c1540-1807 • battling 1548-1662 • rich 1577- • increaseful 1593-1599 • uberous a1626-1651 • exuberant 1645-1871 • fresh 1648 • productive 1846- • generous 1853-1860 • innerly 1868 (West Indies) • oasal 1888 • oastic 1896 01 making vegetative 1594- • fertile 1597- • impregnating 1705; 1846 • fecund 1827-

I have just the one severed tail and just one endless tale to tell. I spæk not for the foreign princes and queens—not for the temmeless harlots nor the tiresome hags—but for myself who inhabits this here grund. For the simplest of tears that one mother may spell and durst she nurst the earth.

I do dearly love a scholar; and so I choose to believe—his word—in his world. He has the hand of his queen and I have a sharp and shiny love in mine own hand. It might just be a set of Forever-Sharp knives that I purchased for forty dollars, but it is my story, my bargain, mine’s worth prize. And these hands; these knives; these words; they are not eathly, but enduring. They have a place in my drawers and on mine taek tongue. My word, they’ll get grubby from temme to temme, but I will keep them whetted and wanted; I’ll hold them from rust and ruin. Invest, invest and they’ll last a shile whillum; and that, my word, is a long, long temme. Perhaps sharper and more viscose—twenty-five years onword—just as all the lingue in every grund of each prince and their prize tail.

‘Here. Take the fallen pages from mine book. That, my friend, is to give.’

‘But what about the glue? You gave your word to that lady.’

‘Yes. But I know it differently now. Words have many meanings. Glue is to give; I giften to you.’ And this there is where the glass-gazer sees and tells the tale of warning and beeseeing; she spæk the fecund yet.

Don’t take, and don’t wait to be giften, nether. You must keep giving all the words and shaping the stories of mothers, of bonds, of scholars, of princes—the ones that you will believe. There have been stories long pæs, and the stories before them, and the stories before them, even now; you ent the story—no-sir-ee—come now, be thy glue.

Yes-sir-ee, come now, be yourn own lingue.

‘Forever is a long long temme, eh?’

‘Yeah. Even twenty-five years is a long time.’

‘Well that sounds like quality enough for me; I think I’d like to meet this lady, selling shiny love at the stand.’

You take the pages from my hand.

So that’s why I’ll buy it. It’s a pittance in price and one helluva prize; and if it can last me through all the rusty bits, can cut me free from that Mata, inner and outer—well I’ll invest in it as much as I fruitfully can. The happy-ever-after may not be mine ende—to borrow, steal or rightfully own—yet now it is mine ende to believe; and it is mine ende to give—

as a true story in a book wherever
the glue never came unstuck—
and now it is your tail to
do with as you will—
a tale that happened—
solo appena—
to a friend of
a friend of
mine.
Æt ende.
BOOK REVIEW


What can be gained from examining race as a cognitive aspect of culture? In Race Migrations: Latinos and the Cultural Transformation of Race (Stanford University Press, 2012), Wendy D. Roth makes several claims. First, that race should be examined within the context of the sociology of culture. Second, that a mixed-methods approach bridging psychology and symbolic interactionism might best bring to light the contested situation of Latinos in the United States, where Latinos complicate the black and white binary racial schema. She argues that racial formation is not a one-way process. Instead, the ‘racial schemas’ that migrant Latinos bring to the United States affect not only other migrants but non-migrants as well. If race is a transnational cultural phenomenon, it is also a repertoire, a series of learned codes, in an ongoing process of internalisation.

Examining Puerto Rican and Dominican “migrants” and “non-migrants,” Roth’s primary method is to show participants a series of photographs of what she considers to be archetypal skin colors of Latinos and then inquire about the race of the archetypes. These photographs range in skin color and other characteristics, such as sex, hair type, and nose width. She finds a host of racial schemas, creating a “racial schema portfolio” (13). The schemas discussed by Roth (18) include a continuum racial schema (a range from white to black), nationality racial schema, U.S. racial schema (white or black), and Hispanicised U.S. racial schema (white, black, and Hispanic). The four main chapters deal with the writers’ life stories and early traumatic experiences (Chapter 1), their pressures on the job as journalists (Chapter 2), experiences as observers of war and military correspondents (Chapter 3), as well as their history of substance abuse (Chapter 4). Rather than simply adding writer after writer, Underwood sorts his analysis by themes, which gels well with his theoretical framework and avoids too descriptive an account. In what is perhaps too short an epilogue, Underwood speculates about the extent to which modern developments in journalism, such as the increasing isolation of journalists but also the higher awareness of trauma may be leading to different experiences or expressions of the issues affecting their lives. An added bonus is the appendix, which presents separate tables on writers’ traumatic experiences outside of and within journalism, making for an easily accessible overview of the main commonalities between them.

Roth argues that migrant Latinos in the United States do not abandon Hispanic Caribbean racial schemas; instead, they think in terms of different schemas depending on the setting. When asked about the race of the people in the photographs, participants pulled schemas from their portfolio depending on the assumed location of the photographs. If the setting was presumed to be the Dominican Republic, the schemas became those of the Dominican Republic. When the same participants were told to think of the location as the United States, they adopted a U.S. racial schema. She suggests that racial schemas coexist in each person’s portfolio as a repertoire.

According to Roth, both migrant and non-migrant Latinos in the United States employ a form of code switching. One of Roth’s metaphors for the racial schema is that of the artist’s portfolio (14). Schemas resemble roles; actors can take on or switch schemas depending on the context. However, this is not to imply agency on the part of the actors. Roth demonstrates that this code switching occurs in a setting of racial oppression. In the United States, a Latino with darker coloured skin might act Latino or black depending on perceived benefits for adopting certain codes.

Roth poses a question which she ultimately does not fully address: how do non-migrants react to encountering the presumably new racial schemas of migrants? How do their schemas transform? In this work, her research is so focused on the experience of individuals that she does not go into situations in which individuals are coerced into keeping to certain self-identified races or racial schemas. It would be fascinating to learn more about the experience of individuals who do not succeed at building adequate racial schema portfolios, or to learn more about situations in which code switching is not an option.

For Roth, racial acculturation is a relational process driven by migration, differing cultural assumptions, and a narrow set of options for Latino self-imagining. This is a strong account of the experience of Latinos living within a binary black-white U.S. racial logic. This is a work to contend with—especially her argument for the importance of keeping the categories of race and ethnicity, and her finding that for migrant Latinos increased education results in a reliance on the biological notion of race (45). We can learn from her mixed-methods approach when thinking about future research and for her illustration of how racial schemas and racial culture transform in tandem, making and remaking race-thinking.

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My Grandfather (1991)

In my early phase of painting and lithography I had an expressionist style. Over time this evolved through my study of the latent mystery and magic in the Sino-Japanese ink and brush tradition. I became preoccupied with absorbent rice paper and its sucking tendency with ink and its potential for abstraction in the space–form interplay. Over the last 12 years it has become my main medium of painting.
I now live as a painter for whom art is a constant analytical process that does not merely reproduce images but seeks to realise three art historical/aesthetic intentions:

1. How, with minimum means and such precision, did the great Taoist and Zen scholar painters capture both motion and motionlessness and how did they evoke animated forms suspended in the emptiness?

2. How to build on the experiments of the Euro-American abstract expressionists and their quest for abstraction with East Asian ink brush. I am thinking of artists like Jackson Pollock, Franz Kline, Mark Tobey, Clyfford Still and Julius Bissier.

3. How to extend and interpret the brush ink works of Bengali painters from the early 20th century and their eclectic nature in order to understand the Sino-Japanese tradition contextualised in the Indian landscape.

These aesthetic/historical tasks guide my intention to explore images via my visual response to my socio cultural setting. This is a dynamic mix combining a restless search and with occult introspection and it propels me to decode imageries stored in my subconscious mind as well.

I share this artistic practice with some close colleagues here in Calcutta and elsewhere. For me it is my sustainable activity in my society.

In my work one may notice emerging quasi organic rhythmic formations that chase each other across the paper. Figures work the tension between tormented twisted and resilient forms. I draw on deity making in our tradition, Tantric mantra recitation, poetic words. Even small words from Haiku and Bengali poems instigate my process of making in which phonetic reality is sometimes silently converted to image.

My painting has no event narration but happenings, no statement but experience, being simultaneously a making and a subversion. I call this Liila (Sanskrit for play). This is my way of being in my society and I hope my people can share in this. It can help us rethink both living and being.

Amitava Bhattacharya is a visual artist based in Kolkata, West Bengal, India. He is from an old Bengali family and has worked to extend the Begali and Indian visual traditions that he inherited. He has held a number of fellowships which have allowed him to study in China where he explored Chinese calligraphy techniques which he now incorporates into his work.
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- V29.3 Biodiversity in the 21st Century
- V29.4 The Visual Narrative: Alternative photographic exposures
- V30.1 The Value of Techniques
- V30.2 Shifting Cultures
- V30.3 Challenging Contemporary ‘Democracy’ and Identifying Problems
- V30.4 Pass Fail: Assessing contemporary educational reform
- V31.1 Community climate Action
- V31.2 Politics and Ethics in New Media
- V31.3 Disaster Dialogues: Representations of catastrophe in word and image.