

Education – the art of seeking alternative modes of thinking

Shahab Yar Khan

Filozofski fakultet Univerziteta u Sarajevu
(Faculty of Philosophy, University of Sarajevo)

Abstract

The article is an attempt to re-define the purpose of education in the lives of individuals and communities in the 21st century. The traditional academia, designed by establishments as forces of status quo, is exhausted like other institutions of patriarchal system. Education as well has become a 'free-for-all tragi-comedy'. There is an unassailable gulf between the system of education which advocates status quo and the Socratic method of teaching of soul searching. Global increase in literacy rate paradoxically remains passive towards unprecedented increase in human trafficking, prostitution, state-level financial corruption, religious extremism and crimes against humanity. Despite long established tradition of 'secular' and 'spiritual' education the world has managed to 'evolve' in our age the most non-philosophical minds of human history. Our current models of education have failed to provide societies with decent models of citizenship. Their objective to well-train the members of a community to have life of cooperation and therefore life of symmetry stands in historical retrospective as mockery of its own self. In our age even the financial security is not a guarantee after full-fledge university education. Purposelessness haunts over the entire system. To work within the existing system with 'makeup' alterations suits the forces of status quo as survival strategy. In the last

decade as well we have seen the makeup shift from one kind of authors to another slightly altered list, one way of asking exam questions to another modified one, from one kind of lengthy paper work to another kind of creative means of wasting collective human hours and efforts throughout Europe, Asia and the US. The end result is production of even more dull and numbed states of minds. Education remains purposeless unless it is understood as the art of seeking alternative modes of thinking. Students must be 'alienated' from evaluation process, in other words the existing system of exams should be eliminated. The article introduces four essential qualities of the model teacher i.e. modesty, compassion, philosophical wisdom and quest for social justice. Means are suggested to induce these essential elements among the youth as well at the end of the discourse.

Key words: mode of alternative thinking, alienation, forces of status quo, Socratic-prophetic tradition, alligning scales of mounting problems, citizenship, cooperation, competition.

This Jan. during my two days talks on various issues related to Shakespeare's *King Lear* and Renaissance at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Split, I successfully invoked, on one hand, certain young minds to raise questions to discredit traditional academia designed by the forces of establishments; I provoked, a great deal, certain others to criticize my observations on exhausted nature of patriarchal system, state of affairs of the world religions and most of all the 'free-for-all tragi-comedy' called education. My English host, a thorough gentleman, a man of great discipline and courtesy, buried deep all the manners of charity to call my position on education as 'disrespectful towards the noblest of the professions'. My efforts to defend my case, even with my 'ultimate argument' of my eight centuries' old origin in higher education enforcing upon me the utmost respect for it not disrespect, for what I oppose happens to be the model of education of our age not the profession itself, were simply foiled. We parted in a grim note.

We will patch up soon as we are good friends but can we ever bridge the gulf, this event once again lead me to ponder in all earnestness, between the system of education which advocates status quo and the Socratic method of teaching of soul searching. The forces of status quo attempt to create individuals for citizenship. But if knowledge and

truth are found within, one can never discover these without means of self-reflection. Since the days of Plato and Aristotle the world has debated over the subject of learning and education. And since the days of Krishna, Confucius and Buddha and all the way to the prophetic tradition of the monotheistic scriptures, the world has searched for the model that could best educate the mankind. But after centuries of experimentations and millenniums of investigations, we still have to figure out that why every time a crisis hits a human community, norms, principles and disciplines of education fail all of us.

Former Yugoslavia, for instance, in the wake of the worst massacres and crimes against humanity committed in Europe since the World War II had almost 98 percent literacy rate. A very similar percentage, rather higher, Sri Lanka maintained for decades before entering its ethnic civil war in 1990's against its rebellious Tamil population. Somalia, Sudan, and other West African nations by the close of the last century with less than 30 percent literacy did not stand far behind their greatly educated contemporaries in their ingenious inventive methods to commit war crimes. One must wonder, during armed conflicts, worldwide, what difference the literacy rates do make in interrupting brutality, savagery and crimes against humanity. Mass graves, concentration camps, rapes, destruction of the monuments -----, from the most literate to the most illiterate nations the pattern remains the same. We also have the right to ask that why the global increase in literacy rate paradoxically remains passive towards unprecedented increase in human trafficking, prostitution, state-level financial corruption, religious extremism and most horrific kinds of street crimes taking place on daily basis around the world? Why, despite long established tradition of 'secular education' in the Western cultures and 'spiritual education' in their Oriental counterparts, we have managed to –'evolve' in our age the most non-philosophical minds of the elite ever in human history (minds of the 'common' majority remain un-evolved any way and are not even worth referring to)? How did it happen that philosophy became dead as a subject, in the sense that it does not relate to the social issues and life crises of almost all the nine billion people of this world. Most of the educated people cannot even name the philosophers of their contemporary times. This is a test which I have enjoyed presenting time and again as a surprise question to very wide range of audiences in seminars, lectures, class rooms, conferences, 'name four philosophers of your

age?’ No one, literally no one, has come up with an answer in the last decade. This much for the ‘thinking brains’ of the age of information, they can’t recall the names forget about the impact on their minds of the philosophies of the minds that don’t, at least for them, even exist. However, in this remarkable age of information, almost everybody in the auditoriums knows the names of the top sportsmen (footballers, cricketers, tennis players depending which part of the world you are from), best actors, top fashion models, pop singers and musicians etc.*

‘Whatever literacy rate your nation has, be sure of one fundamental reality that if so far this existing kind of education has not sorted out world’s basic issues such as injustice, non-acceptance/intolerance, exploitation of the weak, social security, health, housing, basic rights of life of decency, this education will only multiply to the set of already existing set of incomprehensible problems. Education measured in aligning scales of the mounting problems, should be condemned at least criticized as means of reform as education no more remains the issue of ignorance and knowledge, now it is the basic question of the survival of human race.

Let this be the final alarm call for the world that with this ‘surplus’ growth in literacy rate, there is no vision in prospect for the solution of the basic human crises building like a volcano about to erupt in the midst of our social structures.

It is an extremely dangerous notion to oversimplify the issue of education in our days. Forces of status quo wish to continue without much deliberation with their bureaucratic watchdogs holding firm their ‘posts’ while the ‘bear’, just to use Shakespearean metaphor for the sake of lamentation, ‘tied to stake is bound the fight the course’. This world is a dangerous place to be in and this world is designed by all means by those who are considered educated. They have failed all the traditions, prophetic or Socratic, that ever came to this world of suffering to offer solutions against social inequalities and injustice.

Our current models of education have failed to provide societies with decent models of citizenship. Their objective to well-train the

¹ It is not to underestimate the efforts that the great actors and great sports persons put in their daily lives to develop their unique trademark skills but to mock at the ‘commonness’ that looks with lusty eyes at the glamour alone and learns nothing from the hard work behind the ‘images of glory’.

members of a community to have life of cooperation and therefore life of symmetry stand in historical retrospective as mockery of its own self. There is, though, one more ‘familiar’ way of looking at education, education as creativity. No problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it, is a well-known statement of Elbert Einstein. Can the unfertile ground of our current educational systems provide room for the kind of challenging mind to appear that works to demolish its own breeding ground and replaces or at least reforms the entire system with the one which forces of status quo cannot cope up with as these forces cannot function within any framework of thought but the one which these design for their own convenience at the cost of the social wellbeing of the members of the community? These forces of conservatism out of necessity must work against the forces of change; it is instinctively a matter of survival. To work within the existing system with ‘makeup’ alterations suits their survival strategy (in the last decade as well we have seen the makeup shift from one kind of authors to another slightly altered list, one way of asking exam questions to another modified one, from one kind of lengthy paper work to another kind of creative means of wasting collective human hours and efforts throughout Europe, Asia and the US. The end result is production of even more dull and numbed states of minds). The established, traditional academia cannot survive if education changes itself to a creative mode; creativity not as seen by them as means of untiringly endless, socially irrelevant, philosophically exhausted, practically illogical but terminologically-verbally-rhetorically furbished and delicious argumentation. This is how academia over the millenniums has designed all frames of social discourse and all fit in easily with the same identical formula applied with slight change of the name of the subject. From parliamentary speeches of politicians to religious discourses, from class room lectures to universities senates’ meetings, from economics forums, social work plans, efforts of NGOs to academic conferences and seminars all are exhausted, irrelevant talks and terminologically-verbally-rhetorically furbished and delicious argumentation.

Throughout the world, concerns have been shown over the consistent failure of the existing models of education. The following report is taken from *the Washington Post*. The writer Elaine Weiss is introduced in the text as the national coordinator for the Broader Bolder Approach to Education, Economic Policy Institute.

‘So much has been said about new “21st century” skills, standards, and learning requirements, that they have become virtually synonymous with “college and career readiness” (a similarly poorly defined goal). The purportedly new demand for higher-level and different skills has further increased the pressure for more tests and higher stakes attached to them. A new study showing explosive growth in student poverty suggests, though, that we have misidentified the problem. What if we have actually been teaching the right skills in U.S. schools all along – math and reading, science and civics, along with creativity, perseverance, and team-building? What if these were as important a hundred years ago for nurturing innovative farmers and developers of new automobiles as they are now for creating the next generation of tech innovators? What if these are the very characteristics of U.S. schools that have made us such a strong public education nation, and the current shift toward a narrower agenda just dilutes that strength? What if, rather than raising standards, and testing students more, the biggest change we need to address is that of our student body?

The October 2013 Southern Education Foundation study indicates clearly that poverty, which has long been the biggest obstacle to educational achievement, is more important than ever. It is our true 21st century problem. Fifty years ago, we educated mostly working-class kids and up, and we did not expect those at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder to graduate. Now we educate all students, including the very poorest and otherwise disadvantaged. And we expect them all to graduate. Compounding this shift, a large and growing proportion of U.S. students live in poverty and even concentrated poverty, have a disability, and/or are learning English as a second language. THAT is the paradigm shift, and we need a totally new set of policies to address that 21st century reality. In 2000, students who were eligible for free or reduced-price meals made up at least half of the student body in four states. Just eleven years later, over half of public school students are poor in 17 states, including every Southern state but Virginia and Maryland, and most Western states. Student poverty is the dominant reality in schools in three of the biggest states – California, Texas, and Florida—and nearly the majority in New York, Michigan, and Illinois. The 21st century has sharply increased the proportion of parents who are unemployed, whose jobs do not pay enough to provide basic food, shelter, clothing, and health care for their children, and/or whose immigrant status limit their capacity to navigate the education system and restrict

them to a shadow economy. This devastating reality demands a set of education reforms radically different from those on which policy has fixated of late.’

(<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2013/10/26/the-real-21st-century-problem-in-public-education>)

I would like to share one more abstract form a round-table discussion among British teachers, taken from *the Guardian*, before I introduce my definition of and a suggestive note of a general nature on education:

‘What is education for in the 21st century?’

Guy Claxton Education means learning to think for yourself, learning to make and repair friendships, learning to see other people’s points of view, learning not to be frightened of uncertainty or difficulty. Unfortunately the system, whether it be in a free school, an academy or a comprehensive school, seems to comprehensively neglect the development of those qualities in the obsession with exam results.

Melissa Benn There’s something more to education, which is about learning how to live in society, learning how to be a citizen, learning how to be self-reliant and all those kinds of skills. It’s a bigger task than just exams.

Peter Hyman I think we’re preparing children for the middle of the 20th century and not for the 21st. And by that I mean we are not equipping them with the skills and the attributes and the competencies that they need. And I think that’s partly an obsession with a certain type of rigid exam. And there’s no assessment of all those other qualities which we all know that children need out there in the real world.

So in a way we’re talking about a difference between learning and schooling. Schooling for exams is very different from an appetite for learning.

Guy Claxton Absolutely. The most important thing is not what we’re teaching; it’s *how* we’re teaching. There is a real concern that many young people at the top end of the examination pile are thrown by being asked questions at their Oxbridge entrance exams which they haven’t prepared for, and they think it’s deeply unfair if they’re asked to think on their feet. Well, what kind of an education is that? So it’s not just the Neets [Neet is a government acronym for people “not in education, employment, or training”] or the kind of excluded middle. It’s even the high-achieving students who’ve been deprived of the opportunity to develop curious minds by teachers who’ve been able to spoon-feed them to their grades.

Melissa Benn I really wanted to question the assumption that our school

system is in crisis. First, our economy's in crisis and we don't have enough jobs for young people. Second, we have always failed to educate lower-income, poorer children, so in a way you can say this is just a continuing problem rather than a new problem.

Melissa Benn Grammar schools may have educated some people well, they may have produced a generation of people – Alan Bennett and so on – people from lower middle-class homes who did well, but then 80% were written off under the system. I just don't think it's a system that can be justified.

Rachel Wolf The question is: are we letting down a very large percentage of pupils? I think unquestionably. We have got to change things, because otherwise we are going to continue to have a significant proportion of society who are simply not getting the chance. That's not only bad for the economy – it's unjust.

How would a teacher in your classroom behave differently now compared with 10 years ago?

Peter Hyman I think it is that a classroom now in most schools [is] the same as 100 years ago. Let's break up the school day into some one-to-one sessions where you're being guided by a coach, some small group sessions, a bit like a seminar. Why not go to a lecture theatre then, and have a really exciting lecture with 50 students? Think of how exciting the learning will be. Teachers can't, under this model, be purely subject specialists. They've got to be something far: coach, mentor, project facilitator, lecturer. It's asking a lot, but I think we can get teachers who are willing to do it. Now that's a learning revolution.

Melissa Benn Education is more concerned with the learning rather than defining the learner. Children take IQ test. And I have mixed feelings about it because in one way I think it helps teachers to see what people know in a very limited way and how they can help them. In another, I think it's a horribly constraining way of looking at pupils.

Guy Claxton There's a kind of shift in the core metaphor: the idea is that the brain is like a muscle, or lots of different muscles, and they strengthen through exercise. And some kids come into school with bits of their brain musculature not very well developed for all kinds of reasons. But that doesn't mean they're then consigned for life to a bottom stream or, in the old days, a secondary modern school. As a teacher it means you have to see yourself almost like a fitness trainer, that you're in the business of helping some kids who have got very good skills to get even better and other kids who maybe haven't got very good skills at all to build them up from the bottom, just as when you go to a gym there's a whole range of people working at their own level of fitness to get better. Every classroom should be seen like that, rather than kids being clumped into the bright ones and the average

ones and the weak ones. That's pernicious. Of course, real ingredients that will shift schools is not lots of money or changing structures, it's trying to fire the imagination. **Rachel Wolf** What does we require to transform learning, great teachers.

Sue Street We have got generational educational failure. We have got parents who didn't do very well at school who are actually scared to walk through the door of a school. That is where it becomes so difficult for schools to engage those parents to support their child.

But you can't have schools where only 30% of the pupils are getting five GCSEs A* to C. It's a signal that something isn't right.

Rachel Wolf I just wanted to raise a couple of things that I've come across in the States which I think are very interesting on the teacher effectiveness point. One interesting thing is they've started trying to measure individual teacher effectiveness. In fact, the *LA Times* tried to print a list of all of the teachers in the area and how much value-add they were creating. Now there are all sorts of problems with that.

Melissa Benn I think that's appalling, publishing the names of teachers. I really think that we have to keep in mind that schools are connected to community and what's going on in society, and we can't put it all on the teacher. **Finally, what is the best asset of education?**

Guy Claxton Open mind and inquisitiveness. **Sue Street** Knowing that they don't know everything but knowing how to find it. **Melissa Benn** Informed curiosity. **Peter Hyman** The ability to think. **Rachel Wolf** Adaptability.' (<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2011/sep/04/how-do-we-make-schools-fit-for-children>)

Situation both in the US and the UK since the dates of publications of these above quoted passages has worsened. Ironically, these debates and concerns echo our own issues, regardless wherever we are in this global village in the 21st century. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) shows data that the performance of American students is consistently mediocre as compared to their 'international equivalents', such as the students living in Japan, South Korea, China, Australia and Canada. British education as well at the moment is going through its worst crisis since 1950's. European Union's model in terms of its sustainability has already been questioned as it remains closely connected to its socio-economic failures throughout from Greece to Spain and from France to Italy. Besides, the scandalous educational

programmes launched by the EU with terms like 'Erasmus couples' already becoming authentic and the acclaimed major contribution of this 'free-for-all tragi-comic' educational programme the birth of one million babies through these 'couples', puts the entire idea of education in Europe as character training, industrial skill, self-restraint, decency, enlightenment, economic utility into serious jeopardy.

(see link:<http://www.vieuws.eu/citizens-consumers/erasmus-impact-study-reveals-1-million-babies-born-to-erasmus-couples>), (see the link: <https://www.surveio.com/survey/d/V3C1P5Z3L7A3W9Q3N>).

We don't even need to mention the ongoing disastrous situation in East Europe, the Balkans, Central Asia, South Asia, the Middle East, South Africa, West Africa etc.

The world needs to change its perception and its attitude towards education to make some sense out of the non-sense the current model of education has spread all around us. And we can all begin by redefining it as a term and as means of purposefulness in life. I personally understand education as art of seeking.....seeking alternative modes of thinking. Educated human mind at its both the lowest or the loftiest must be capable of rising above conservatism; to remain a conservative one does not require any state of mind whatsoever, no education either. No serious process of mind is essentially necessary to follow the routine that systems incorporate within. To challenge this routine, one needs a mind that conceives the idea of something which lacks formulation, description, design and even existence. Education, only then, becomes equated with the idea of 'human quest'. Education must not be equated with 'experience' if it deals with the concept of knowledge as knowledge, since it cannot be constructed, is not part of human experience. Knowledge exists as cosmic vibration and the elevated mind seeks it to enter the mode of thinking. This is the first step towards acquiring education as fulfillment of human condition. I will return in a while to the methods required to create a vibrant mind at a stage as early as the pre-school. However, once the mind is vibrant, it starts entering various stations of wisdom. At this stage of initiation of mind as a thinking muscle, information shall flood in. Information of all necessary sort, 'moral maxims, habit of industry', logic in terms of training to discipline processes of thought and rhetorics to express those thoughts, music and literature to enhance the faculty of imagi-

nation, legal and illegal social propositions, geographical and cultural domains, economic-political realism/idealism, confidence building measures through methods of self defence and vocabulary enrichment devices, concepts of decency and elegance in dressing, balanced food habits and understanding of the cosmic forces and planetary bodies in relation to human existence on earth. All should be the part of primary and secondary school syllabuses with no need of including students to play a role in teachers's evaluation processes. By this statement I mean to say, in simple words, erase the concept of examination from education.²

Examination is the biggest killer of the mind that wishes to evolve in Nature. The concept of examination is necessarily compounded with the meanness and cheapness of 'scoring high'. It solidifies within the otherwise flexible design of human nature the destructive instinct of competition, burrying deep what could have been the fundamental purpose of education, the nurturing of the nobler spirit of cooperation. Since examination is the easiest way for teachers to evaluate the so called worth of a student, over the centuries all othe possibilities are over-sighted, neglected. Students, as a principle, must not be allowed to participate in evaluation system unless they are trained for bureaucratic jobs (as these jobs do not require higher level of intellectual involvement), they must be 'alienated' from the entire process. Teaching technically is about 'alienating' not incorporating student-body into its work plan. Teaching, thus, is the art of 'alienation'. Teachers must learn to alienate the students as their audience by keeping it alive to the ideological byplay of the symbolism of the subject. Every subject is an ideologue in the wider sense of the term and every lecture delivered offers advantage to promote and determine the social range and the symbolism of the subject ideologically rather than psychologically. Alienation is far more reaching an effect than representational plan as representation simultaneously marks interruption. Students' representaion in evaluation system through assignments, essays and examinations etc. is a hindrance, a major obstacle for the cause of education; development of the means to cause its elimination must be

²I have in the last decade, with great deal of success put into practice this concept to some extant and the result in terms of students' response to the subject as an ideologue is the most intense, wholesome and revolutionaizing. It will be my pleasure to share the details of the experiment with individual teachers, organizations and institutions.

the priority of all sensible educationists and experts of pedagogy throughout the world. The greatest teachers of humanity never prepared a question paper for the students they were grooming for the future benefit of their communities. Who can possibly imagine, Jesus Christ at the last supper bringing forth from his pocket a surprise test for the twelve disciples who needed to choose any three out of four questions and answer each within 250 words. Imagination cannot approve of it, at best it will be a crooked joke. Muhammed (SA) never did it in his mosque of Medina where the future leadership of the world was receiving training nor Lord Buddha is reported to have a set of questions for his followers. Socrates, the father of all philosophical thinking in Europe, never graded Plato the way we do our 21st century 'future of mankind'. Who else a teacher must learn from if not from the greatest examples in the field of teaching. Up to this day the prophets of the Scriptures (whether monotheistic or paganistic) and the philosophers of the antiquity remain the most influential examples of teaching logic, rhetoric, citizenship and spirituality to the world. Why can't we adopt the best model, widely available and easily known to us. We find it difficult to adopt it for one obvious reason, we do not have among us the teacher of the kind that we are referring to as our model. The failure of several generations of the educated has resulted in to this barrenness where humans become mere 'resource' through 'human resource programmes' and where their 'colosseums of learning' produce beings without character, in our days even without promise of financial success. Today to achieve economic success one does not need any university degree any more, Bill Gates was a university drop out and so is the case with many other billionaires of our age. Teaching has become a purposeless job and students with their flat barren faces keep on wondering about the purposefulness of their value of education. In the midst of this chaos, we need to return to the lost model of teaching to keep the purposefulness both in education and in humanity alive.

The model teachers are the ones who commit to their subject as ideological symbolism, they happen to be their thoughts personified, their vision of the present, past and the future of their communities is not blurred by ambition and desire but remains philosophical and they are the ones who never speak a word that they do not live and never live what they do not speak. The model teacher can bring up a community by freeing it from the illusions of material measures of success and

induce a vision where adopted poverty (not inflicted poverty) appears as a matter of grace not shame. The model teacher is a liberator of the community from its narrow goals of acquiring possessions, corrupted spirit of competition of society to own more resources for personal purposes, vulgar and cheap entertainments in the name of ceremony, ritual, fashion or just killing time and guides it towards a set of ideals set by the personal example of sacrifice (the root meaning of the word is ‘sacred’, thus in the wider sense of the term), love, compassion, dedicated commitment, inventiveness, creativity and sense of good judgment and sensibility. However as already observed, this model teacher is not to be found without much pain (if at all) in our ironically developed world. It seems that it is very easy to be adherent of Socratic principles, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam etc. But it’s somewhat impossible to inherit the traits of Socrates, Buddha, Christ or Muhammed (SA). All the followers of the great masters of the mankind as soon as possible, just to begin with, if start living the lives of the social model of their heroes, the world will improve the following instant. Live the lives of modesty without any quest to increase personal wealth or to acquire material possessions beyond the range of what we may call the ‘necessary’. This in simplest possible words is the definition of the word, character. Without this character, we cannot have the characteristics of a teacher whose influence revolutionizes the minds of the youth of a community. This is the bond of ‘selflessness’. Without this, all shall remain, all the efforts of introducing pedagogical methods and arranging teachers’ training sessions mere ‘makeup’, a wasted effort that must result into the kind of the world we live in. Living model of character in teachers alone shall create a living model of character in students. The world hasn’t tried it yet, it is worth trying as a scientific methodology for pedagogy to apply it and try rehabilitating your chaotic, lunatic world. Instead of teachers’ training programmes let’s have Teachers’ character training programmes. We have the ready-made models available to us that we all can agree upon and we still have people around who can guide us more about the model of social character of these prophets, philosophers and teachers to design one year character training sessions. Let’s have mental and physical exercises during these sessions, model of which also exists in various traditions of the world, and ‘evolve’ a teacher whose virtues are humility not pride and arrogance, social modesty not possession-collecting ambition and desire, philosophical wisdom not bureaucratic

authority, compassion, love and sacrifice not official red-tapism and clerical paper work. Modesty, philosophical wisdom, compassion, thus are the three fundamental essentials of teaching. With the fourth one the model is completed, impulse of social justice. It is do-able and more importantly there is no other way out for the survival of all human race but the revival of this model of teacher. Without a model teacher, model student shall remain an impossibility. The present system, like any other institution of the patriarchal system, is already exhausted and at best personifies the meaning of the gulf of misunderstanding that exists between our hope in education and its real output in our societies. This crisis is going to deepen further within the next couple of years. With the ever increasing number of people living on or below poverty line in many countries, with the fear of global political uncertainties leading to economic depression, banking sector weaker than ever, refugee crisis of the worst kind since the days of WWII striking alarms at the door steps of the so-called developed world and the class differences ever widening as gaps not just between various nations but within nations as well, the days of the current model of education are numbered. Soon the world will start regarding all educational disciplines, established theories, exam methods as obsolete. Already the 'traditional' job of the teacher i.e. to impart information about the subject as its expert has faded out. Within a decade the increase in the use of means of communication has offered students throughout the world better, more comprehensive and versatile sets of information back at home than a teacher could ever provide in a boring class room session even with the cheap attempt to attract the minds through multi-media presentations. Not just humanities, even medicine, an essentially practical business, is made available online by many universities as programme for distant learners. With horror teachers are having debates, the kind of which I quoted above, without much realization that they are already things of the past if they remain what they have been for the past many centuries. The makeup alterations will not help. They will be seen in museums soon rather than in class rooms. To survive, the community of teachers have to understand the only thing that electronic education cannot offer a student is 'character-building'. Character-building is a process and it happens only through following the personal examples set by a role model, it is even more effective when the model happens to be an expert in a particular field of studies as well. Teachers' primary job determined

by the forces of the laws of necessity in future is character-building through using their subject as means of an ideological byplay, relevant to social states, meaningful to satisfy spirit of inquiry and as sensible practically as the wisdom of the day requires to foresee ‘tomorrow’.

‘Tomorrow’ is not detached from ‘today’, it can be constructed within the flow of time by those who understand the meaning of ‘today’, educational reconstructionists have simply ignored this possibility. To have this smooth transformation one needs to have along with ‘the integrity of the spirit, heart, head and hands’ the eye that perceives the unseen as the ‘seen/scene’. This happens only when the mind is vibrant, not trained. Trained mind moves towards exhaustion as it perceives knowledge through experience which leads to catastrophe of personal interpretations with wide ranging contradictions related from both individual to individual and within individual’s own self. It is a tragedy that shall never lead to knowledge but only to endless documentation, piles of data-based researches, irrelevant academic pursuits and ultimately to exhaustion.

A vibrant mind is an inspired mind, not a designed mind. Rousseau, the first European thinker to suggest with definite good intent that education should be shaped to the child. ‘The only habit which the child should be allowed to form is to contract no habit whatever’, is a popular suggestion by him. I wonder should courtesy and empathy be excluded from the habit of mind as well. What a horrific approach towards upbringing of the future of mankind! One needs to be an observer only to lament at this ‘revolutionary’ ideal. Just by sitting on a bench in some children’s park one witnesses Nature as an art at its very best in a child leading him/her to enter the possibilities of ‘self-hood’ as uncountable habits of the mind in evolution. Childhood is itself a habit of mind evolving in Nature where every moment leads to seeking alternatives.....the absolute form of knowledge. To stay as full of revelations as a child, one should try not losing childhood as a habit of mind ever in life. Barrenness of the adulthood results once the childhood as a habit is compromised and lost for the sake of the competition of life for which our academics wish to prepare us well.

Rousseau’s ‘good intents’ are not unique as time and time again efforts have been made by the educated elite to resolve the crisis of education by ‘fresh’ attempts to introduce one ‘ism’ after the other. Piaget the philosophical founder of the approach where student are encou-

raged to 'construct their own meaning by building on their knowledge and experience' was blended in late 20th century into the research of John Dewey and Vygotsky's to merge developmental psychology into constructivism. Constructivism suggests that students learn by 'doing rather than observing'. Dewey thought it best for the schools to engage students in the real world through practical workshops instead of focusing on passive form of knowledge and memorization. How many kinds of knowledge, year after year every 'golden' generation would have interpreted as world view leading to uncountable constructs of the world, we have missed by not adopting to Dewey's model in our schools. What a loss! What's about teachers' job by the way in the meantime when 'brilliant' students, thousands of them, are constructing their own 'knowledge(s)'? Vygotsky's social constructivism rejected the assumption made by Piaget that learning can be separated from its social context. Actual relationship between individuals, Interpsychological and then intrapsychological developments of a child, make all the higher functions originate within. Bruner the chief theorist among the cognitive constructivists builds on the Socratic tradition of learning through dialogue, encouraging the learner to come to enlighten themselves through reflection. We can go on quoting endlessly as the list of 'great names' is inexhaustible and then wonder why did we do that, to whose benefit did we do that?

I once heard a parable ending with a maxim, 'upon yourselves let your child be a ruler for the first seven years. The next seven years let it be a servile minister at your service. The following seven years allow the child to be your councilor and then let it go free since now your child will survive in any circumstance'.

In front of a ruler one needs to observe certain decorum, mannerism of speech and bearing (comportment), restraint over ordinary impulse and reactions, avoiding those dull and dumb jokes and colloquial cheap expressions which one learns in barrenness of adulthood burying deep the childhood, submission shown through love and compassion, for the sake of bigger good disagreements but with humility and readiness to entertain the king/queen whenever required.

Seven years of constant, daily observance of elevated speech and manners, self-restrain, empathy, compassion, polite correction and inventive sportiveness leaves a child with no other possibility but to evolve a vibrant mind, a mind that is inspired rather than trained.

Parents in this chaotic age are required to play their role more seriously; more passionately than the kids in the neighborhood as they have to be in this age their child's best friends and best influence. They have to prepare themselves for the sake of their children better than they are prepared by their systems; they have to be lot more inventive than they have been ever encouraged by the stereotype societies and dull education systems, definitely more interesting than ipads or cable TV. They have to be more vigilant in their secretive watch and develop sharp sensibility for whatever can be damaging or beneficial for the mental and physical growth of the child. It's challenging because they were not encouraged to evolve knowledge of the damaging themselves since their systems left them to the mercilessness of experimentation to learn. But with little sympathy towards their own sufferings that they overcome by inflicting upon themselves the idea of the 'normal', they can see better. Whatever appears as a normal routine cycle of the society must be avoided as they must keep in minds that it was this 'normal' that made them and their societies absolutely abnormal. For instance the apparently innocent Cinderella, just to mention one out of the uncountable, is a seriously dangerous model of life. It teaches young girls to dream of a charming prince who would miraculously one day rescue her of her plight; it thus sets a model of life where dignity and grace as independent virtues have no scope to prosper. It also teaches young brains that if ever a fairy mother appears with powers to offer anything one needs in life, one should go for expensive shoes, necklaces, fashionable dresses, nice car (all the measures of success of our fake and corrupt societies) rather than asking for, to overcome the trials of time, intelligence, determination, spiritual elevation, physical powers, patience, good judgment, strong will etc.

A child grooming within the bliss of the virtues of comportment, compassion, empathy, inventive thinking and linguistic means to express those thoughts after seven years must enter a new phase where parents must require of it to share all its bliss with the rest of its community. The good speech to show respect towards all it interacts with, comportment to observe shame and decency, compassion and empathy to seek justice for the weak and inventive thinking to find more relevant grounds than offered to him in education to appreciate (not to exploit) the possibilities of the future. The child is now endowed with all the four qualities, necessary ingredients of an educated mind, Modesty

(comportment), compassion, philosophical wisdom and love for justice.

Being grownups in a society it is our responsibility to see that young people receive this message and if possible help them to liberate themselves from the models of barrenness of our civilizations and our fatigued out systems of education. If we happen to be the young, it is our utmost duty to analyze carefully the thoughts presented here and if these hold some ground, try evolving the four fundamentals of an educated being within as soon as possible. Wherever you are in this world, I am here to assist as long as alive. Try to be different from the generations older to yourselves, be these parents, teachers or anybody else; they have left you with a world on the verge of elimination, they are not the models to be followed in any walk of life. Being different has only one possible definition i.e. stop doing all that they have been doing in your societies to make this otherwise a beautiful world a living hell and humanity which otherwise has all the potential to become a junkyard.

The parable, by the way, is Ameer-al-mumineen Imam Ali's (AS), message to the world.

وَمَا عَلَيْنَا إِلَّا الْبَأْسُ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ

Bibliography

1. John Dewey, Arthur Bentley, *Knowing and the Known*. Beacon Press, Boston, 1949.
2. Dewey, J. (1902). *The Child And the Curriculum*. Retrieved from <https://books.google.com/books>
3. Benjamin, L.T., "Why Can't Psychology Get a Stamp?". *Journal of applied psychoanalytic studies*, 2003.
4. Shahab Yar Khan, *Story of an Albion*, Paras Academy, 2016
5. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 30th Anniversary Edition by Paulo Freire
6. <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2011/sep/04/how-do-we-make-schools-fit-for-children>
7. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2013/10/26/the-real-21st-century-problem-in-public-education>
8. Dr. Ebadat Brelvi, *Jadeed Urdu Tanqeed. Idaara Adab o Tanqeed*, Lahore.

Shahab Yar Khan

OBRAZOVANJE - UMJETNOST TRAŽENJA ALTERNATIVNIH NAČINA RAZMIŠLJANJA

Sažetak

Članak je pokušaj da se ponovno definira svrha obrazovanja u životima pojedinaca i zajednica u 21. vijeku. Tradicionalna akademska zajednica, koja je dizajnirana od strane ustanova kao sila statusa quo, iscrpljena je kao i druge institucije patrijarhalnog sistema. Obrazovanje je postalo i “tragi-komedija besplatna za sve”. Postoji nepobitan propust između sistema obrazovanja koji zagovara status quo i Sokratove metode poučavanja duhovnog pretraživanja. Globalno povećanje stope pismenosti paradoksalno ostaje pasivno prema nezapamćenom porastu trgovine ljudima, prostitucije, finansijske korupcije na državnom nivou, vjerskog ekstremizma i zločina protiv čovječanstva. Uprkos dugo uspostavljenoj tradiciji ‘sekularnog’ i ‘duhovnog’ obrazovanja, svijet je u našem dobu uspio ‘evoluirati’ najnefilozofskije umove ljudske istorije. Naši postojeći modeli obrazovanja nisu uspjeli omogućiti društva sa pristojnim modelima državljanstva. Njihov cilj da dobro obuče članove zajednice da žive život u saradnji a time i u simetriji, stoji u istorijskoj retrospektivi kao ismijavanje samog sebe. U našem dobu čak ni finansijska sigurnost nije garancija nakon visokog obrazovanja. Svrshodnost prolazi kroz cijeli sistem. Rad u okviru postojećeg sistema uz kozmetičke promjene odgovara silama statusa quo kao strategija preživljavanja. U posljednjoj deceniji također vidjeli smo kozmetičku izmjenu od jedne vrste autora na drugu malo izmijenjenu listu, jedan način postavljanja ispitnih pitanja na drugi modificiran, od jedne vrste opširne papirologije do drugog vida kreativnih načina za rasipanje kolektivnih ljudskih sati i napora širom Evrope, Azije i SAD. Krajnji rezultat je produkcija još tupljih i omamljenijih stanja uma. Obrazovanje ostaje besmisleno, osim ako se ne shvati kao umjetnost traženja alternativnih načina razmišljanja. Studenti moraju biti “otuđeni” od procesa procjene, odnosno riješiti postojeći sistem ispita. U članku se uvode četiri bitne kvalitete modela nastavnika tj. skromnost, saosećanje, filozofska mudrost i potraga za socijalnom pravdom. Predložena su sredstva za podsticanje ovih osnovnih elemenata među mladima na kraju diskursa.

Ključne riječi: način alternativnog razmišljanja, otuđenje, sile statusa quo, sokratovska proročka tradicija, poravnavanje skala nadolazećih problema, državljanstvo, saradnja, konkurencija.