Edutopias

New Utopian Thinking in Education
BOLD VISIONS IN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH
Volume 5

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Defining characteristics of books in the series are their explicit uses of theory and associated methodologies to address important problems. We invite books from across a theoretical and methodological spectrum from scholars employing quantitative, statistical, experimental, ethnographic, semiotic, hermeneutic, historical, ethnomethodological, phenomenological, case studies, action, cultural studies, content analysis, rhetorical, deconstructive, critical, literary, aesthetic and other research methods.

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Edutopias

*New Utopian Thinking in Education*

*edited by*

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This collection has been a long time in gestation. The idea for a collection was first formulated several years ago when Michael Peters, then at the University of Glasgow, put together a special issue of *Policy Futures in Education*, Volume 1, Number 3, 2003, together with Walter Humes, then of Strathclyde University and now at the University of Aberdeen. A number of the essays for that issue are included in revised form in the present collection, including the following essays: Ivana Milojevic, “Hegemonic and Marginalised Utopias in the Contemporary Western World” (pp. 440–466); Henry Giroux, “Dystopian Nightmares and Educated Hopes: The return of the pedagogical and the promise of democracy” (pp. 467–487); David Geoffrey Smith, “On Enfraudening the Public Sphere, the Futility of Empire and the Future of Knowledge after ‘America’” (pp. 488–503); Zeus Leonardo, “Reality on Trial: Notes on Ideology, Education, and Utopia” (pp. 504–525); Mark Olssen, “Totalitarianism and the ‘Repressed’ Utopia of the Present: Moving beyond Hayek, Popper and Foucault” (pp. 526–552); Michael Young, “Curriculum Studies and the Problem of Knowledge: Updating the Enlightenment?” (pp. 553–564); and Robert A. Davis, “Education, Utopia and the Limits of Enlightenment”, (pp. 565–585). These essays are published here with the permission of the authors and publisher. *Policy Futures in Education* is an international e-journal established by Michael Peters in 2003 (http://www.wwwords.co.uk/pfie/) as a utopian project designed to read and write educational futures. Michael Peters approached John Freeman-Moir at the University of Canterbury, New Zealand – a good friend and old colleague – in 2004 with the prospect of using these essays as the basis for an international collection designed to address utopian thinking in education. The other essays included in the collection were commissioned especially for the collection. We would like to thank the series editors, Kenneth Tobin and Joe Kincheloe at The Graduate Center, City University of New York, USA for giving us the opportunity to publish in their new series *Bold Visions in Educational Research* and to the publisher Peter de Liefde, the founder and owner of Sense Publishers, who has offered editorial support and guided us through the production process. Finally, we would like to dedicate this collection to future generations of education students who may come to understand that with imagination education still
PREFACE

has the traditional capacity to transform individuals, raise the consciousness of gendered, classed and ethnic groups, contribute to nation-building and the democratic project so important to the development of global civil society.

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February 2006
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Christine Forde has strong teaching and research interests in the area of educational leadership and management. She was a member of the development group establishing the Scottish Qualification for Headship, a national preparatory programme for aspiring head teachers in Scotland. She is the co-author of a book Performance Management in Schools: Improving Practice through Professional Development (2001) as well as a number of articles on the concept of school leadership. She is currently completing her second book tentatively entitled Changing Minds, Changing Practice.

John Freeman-Moir teaches sociology and social theory in the School of Education at the University of Canterbury, New Zealand. His recent edited publications include, with Alan Scott, Tomorrow’s Teachers: International and Critical Perspectives on Teacher Education (Canterbury, 2000) and Yesterday’s
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_Dreams: International and Critical Perspectives on Education and Social Class_ (Canterbury, 2003), and with Michael Peters, _Edutopias: New Utopian Thinking in Education_ (Sense, 2006), as well a book on public sculpture, _Walking Through Graham Bennett’s Reasons for Voyaging_ (South Walk, 2003) and an essay on the medals for dishonour of Michael Reed (British Museum, 2005). His research interests centre on utopian social theory in relation to equality, democracy, work and the visual arts.

**Henry A. Giroux** currently holds the Global TV Network Chair Professorship at McMaster University. He has published numerous books and articles and his most recent books include: _The Terror of Neoliberalism_ (Paradigm, 2004); _Against the New Authoritarianism_ (Arbeiter Ring, 2005); _Take Back Higher Education_ (co-authored with Susan Giroux) (Palgrave, 2006), _America on the Edge: Henry Giroux on Politics, Culture and Education_ (Palgrave, 2006); and _Beyond the Spectacle of Terrorism_ (Paradigm, 2006). His primary research areas are: cultural studies, youth studies, critical pedagogy, popular culture, media studies, social theory, and the politics of higher and public education.

**Zeus Leonardo** is Visiting Professor and Acting Director of the Center for Multicultural Education at University of Washington, Seattle. Professor Leonardo has published several dozen articles and book chapters on critical educational theory. His recent books include _Ideology, Discourse, and School Reform_ (Praeger) and he is the editor of _Critical Pedagogy and Race_ (Blackwell). His articles have appeared in _Educational Researcher_; _Race, Ethnicity, and Education_; and _Educational Philosophy and Theory_. Much of his work is interdisciplinary and draws insights from sociology, contemporary philosophy, and cultural studies. In particular, he engages critical theories to inform his analysis of the relationship between schooling and social relations, such as race, class, culture, and gender. His research is informed by the premise that educational knowledge should promote the democratization of schools and society.

**Ivana Milojević**’s interests and experience are in the areas of futures, peace and gender studies, education and sociology. She received a PhD in education from the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences, the University of Queensland. Dr Milojević has taught as a Lecturer at the University of Novi Sad (former Yugoslavia), the University of the Sunshine Coast and is currently a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the University of Queensland. She is also currently teaching a course for undergraduate students at the UQ (Peace Education: Understanding and negotiating conflicts in our schools, families and communities) as well as for postgraduates (Schools That Learn: Creating futures that matter). Her recent publications include: Milojević, I. (2005) _Alternative Futures of Education: Dominant and Contesting Visions_, London: Routledge; Inayatullah, S., Milojević, I. and Bussey, M. (Eds) (2005, forthcoming) _Educational Futures: Neo-Humanism and Transformative Pedagogy_, Taipei: Tamkang University
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Mark Olssen is Professor of Political Theory and Education in the Department of Political, International and Policy Studies at the University of Surrey. He is author or editor of a number of books, including: Mental Testing in New Zealand: Critical and Oppositional Perspectives (1988) (with Elaine Papps), The Doctoring of Childbirth (1997), Education Policy in New Zealand: The 1990s and Beyond (1997) (with Kay Morris Mathews), Michel Foucault: Materialism and Education (1999), and Education Policy: Globalisation, Citizenship, Democracy (2004).

Faruk Öztürk teaches the Department of Instructional Curriculum of the Faculty of Education in Abant Izzet Baysal University, Turkey. His major fields of research and teaching are educational philosophy and Turkish educational history. He is a member of the Association of Children’s Museums.

Michael A. Peters is Professor of Education at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (2005–). He held a chair as Research Professor and Professor of Education at the University of Glasgow (2000–2005) as well as positions as Adjunct Professor of Education at the University of Auckland and Adjunct Professor of Communication Studies at the Auckland University of Technology. He is the editor of three international journals: Educational Philosophy and Theory; Policy Futures in Education; and E-Learning. He is the author or editor of over thirty books, including most recently Deconstructing Derrida: Tasks for the New Humanities (Palgrave, 2005), Building Knowledge Cultures (Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), Why Foucault? New Directions in Educational Research (Peter Lang, 2006), and Edutopias: New Utopian Thinking in Education (Sense, 2006). His research interests include educational philosophy, education and public policy, social and political theory.

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_Dreams: International and Critical Perspectives on Education and Social Class_ (Canterbury University Press, 2003). His research interests centre on the politics and sociology of education, and the politics and sociology of theatre. He has been the theatre critic for the Christchurch Press for twelve years and works with the Te Rakau Hua O Te Wao Tapu trust, a Maori theatre company which creates theatre in prisons and Youth Justice Centres.

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**Leonard J. Waks** earned his Ph.D. in philosophy at the University of Wisconsin (Madison) in 1968. He taught philosophy at Purdue and Stanford before joining the education faculty at Temple where he is now Professor (Emeritus) of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies. He is the author of _Technology’s School_ (JAI, 1995) as well as numerous journal articles and scholarly book chapters. His research is focused on educational arrangements in the emerging global network society.

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The concept and genealogy of “utopia” is a rich tapestry that provides a series of historical links between many of the great works that comprise the western canon. The term itself, coined by Sir Thomas More in the early 16th century, derives from two Greek words: Eutopia (meaning “good place”) and Outopia (meaning “no place”). More’s Utopia, first published at Louvain in 1516, recounts the travels of Raphael Hythlodaeus, who, in the course of a voyage to America, is left behind near Cape Frio to wander across the Island of Utopia (“nowhere”) that is based on an ideal constitution. The work draws selectively on Plato’s Republic and at the same time anticipates Marx. Many scholars after More have discovered the entire edifice of socialism in its pages, including William Morris. As Jason Hans Kleine (1993) argues:

If one characteristic could be found which distinguishes a socialist state from all others it would be the absence of social and economic classes. In Plato’s Republic there are only class distinctions as there are separations between the Harmony of the soul with the virtues; the philosopher, who lives a life of contemplation, is closer to perfection than all else. In Marx’s state the proletariat rebels to once and for all abolish all class distinctions amalgamating the bourgeoisie, through necessity, into their own class creating a solitary class. This is the most crucial and distinctive trait of a socialist utopia (http://www.d-holliday.com/tmore/socialism.htm).

More’s utopia has no classes – everyone shares in the same work, is equal, and has the same rights. Since More, the concept of utopia has been used and re-imagined in a variety of contexts to enrich the possibilities of life, to provide normative orientations, and to stand as models for the future. Today there is a proliferation of literature-based and education-based sites, organizations, and communities that sustain themselves by reference to the utopian tradition.

Ernst Bloch once remarked that people on city streets seem to be thinking about something else; he supposed it was money and the dreams that money might realise; if only. Utopianism in its mundane form as everyday dreams is familiar enough. And it is so common that we can treat it plausibly as a permanent feature of human life. Of course, utopian thinking extends far beyond those moments of fantasy that give some relief from the quotidian of the daily humdrum. However far everyday dreams extend they have their roots in forms of imagination that depend on historical context. Utopian schemes may have the appearance of being
nothing more than castles in the sky, but their foundations and points of origin are as surely to be found in the political economy of ordinary life as it is experienced. This is hardly surprising, however, for a moment’s consideration suggests that the only place for our utopian hopes and dystopian fears to start out from is where we currently are. When, for example, our Mothers and Grandmothers, daughters of war and economic depression, dreamt of making homes, entertaining friends in sitting rooms with carpet on the floors, of modern kitchens and lovely gardens their imaginative pictures were woven from threads of hope overcoming very real fears that patterned a distinctive historical period.

This period was ushered in by WWI and culminated, more or less, with the end of the long economic boom in the early 1970s. Their children were born in the 1950s when liberal intellectuals first announced the end of utopia and ideology. These children matured during the 1960s and were the products of educational systems that spoke about equality of opportunity. Whatever the compromises and shortcomings of social democracy – whether in its European, North American or Australasian variants – the circumstances of life spoke of hope, progress and security. Stated baldly like this we might readily agree that a world that promised a fair measure of each of these would be a utopia indeed. If these three utopian themes are still alive they are now very much muted and qualified. For every hope, every step of what looks like progress, and for the appearance of security, there is equally a set of negatives that ring just as loudly, and more worryingly in the ears of the young and their parents. The political will to imagine much beyond the present seems hardly to exist. And the idea of utopia or the value of utopian thinking is easily dismissed as idle and silly. Or at worst, what lies in the indefinable future is an increasingly clear accentuation of disaster, war, insecurity, environmental collapse, danger. Nothing like an alternative to global capitalism seems remotely possible.

Utopia does not thrive in such an environment and this is reflected in attempts to grasp the nature of the period we live in. The titles of two of Russell Jacoby’s (1999; 2005) recent books capture this sense that utopia in the contemporary world is marginal: The End of Utopia: Politics and Culture in an Age of Apathy, and Picture Imperfect: Utopian Thought for an Anti-Utopian Age. In the second of these works Jacoby offers a defence of what he calls iconoclastic utopianism, a form of thought that he contrasts with so-called blueprint utopianism. Blueprint utopianism is easily mocked because it tries to map out in detail how life should go on in the best of all possible worlds. Taken literally, blueprint utopias can quickly date and within a relatively short period of time seem like little more than a detailing of the prejudices and preferences of their respective authors. At best they are treated as quaint, entertaining diversions. But the rejection of blueprint utopianism and therefore of utopianism overall is also linked, in the works of anti-utopian liberals to the rejection of utopian thought pure and simple, as the virtual if not complete equivalent to totalitarianism. The standard formula is utopia = communism = totalitarianism. Instead, drawing on the Jewish romantic tradition, Jacoby argues for a form of utopianism that is open and provisional. He offers three reasons for the current fate of utopian thought; the collapse of orthodox com-
munism; the conflation of utopianism and totalitarianism; and an impoverishment of what he calls the “Western imagination”. The first we have noted already. It brings with a certain kind of triumphal capitalism, the latest version of which is expressed in the war against terror and the desire of the American President to, as he says, “spread democracy everywhere”. Of the second Jacoby perceptively notes that “When Soviet communism thrived it silenced critics by its putative success. When it failed, it silenced critics by disappearing. Those who resisted the spell of Soviet success have been unable to escape the pull of its collapse”.

The third reason is a little more difficult to pin down, though it is, perhaps, of most interest to educationists. Imagination sustains utopia and is in turn best sustained by relatively unstructured childhood activity. Jacoby concludes that changes in the contemporary management and commodification of childhood within capitalism erode the kinds of imagination that foment utopian thought. Childhood is an arena where the foundations of utopianism can be given a chance. If this so, then utopianism is not just an entertainment but a crucial element in the development of an imaginative disposition oriented to a more humane and inclusive future.

One of the most famous claims made on behalf of utopianism and its connection to imagination we owe to the pen of Oscar Wilde. Much quoted, it captures the sense in which imaginative thought in the context of history is a necessary feature of social life and expectation. “A map of the world that does not include Utopia is not worth even glancing at, for it leaves out the one country at which Humanity is always landing. And when Humanity lands there, it looks out, and, seeing a better country, sets sail. Progress is the realization of Utopias”. Childhood is rich in the formation of “imaginary maps” and in them we find the origins of adult utopian thinking. Without the possibilities of childhood imagination the utopian imagination of adulthood would be very unlikely to emerge.

The connection between imagination and utopia that brings out the foundations of both in human development is of particular significance for educational theory. Education is intrinsically connected with the utopian. Nurturing the young must necessarily bring up the question, education for what? Or in William Morris’s well known formulation, “how shall we live then?” This is not the place to rehearse the history of utopianism and to correlate it with a history of educational thought, but it is worth noting that every great educational theory is imbued with elements of what might be called the utopian disposition. Education at its best reaches beyond the world we now live in, an idea that is frequently evoked in the old cliché that our children are our future. And most utopian schemes have quite a lot to say about education in both its formal and informal senses. Indeed utopias can be thought of as fundamentally educational in the sense that they are “designs” for living – modes of urban and rural planning, technology, work and leisure – designed explicitly for encouraging the development of certain kinds of habits, dispositions and attitudes. Utopia links the spatial dimension of living with the temporal dimension of learning and in that sense any utopian methodology can be said to ground education in the everyday fabric of the imagined society. But this is where we must be careful. While contemporary utopian theory is not inclined to follow in the tradition of devising or defending detailed blueprints, there is
the danger that the fundamental value of utopianism is lost as the literalness and specificity of utopias is rejected. The shift must be made from a utopianism that details the end to which the future must conform to a utopianism that, as Levitas has suggested, is heuristic. We need to understand utopia more from the point of view of metaphor and an invitation to think, dream and consider possibilities in a cognitive context that is free from the usual constraints imposed by the now. The loss of utopianism from modern politics is not to be identified the loss of blueprints, plans and detailed schemes of social administration but the loss of any sense of the role that utopianism might serve. It is the loss of any sense of utopianism as necessary to opening up the future beyond the reach of the status quo. Jacoby puts the point in the following way: “. . . I hold no brief for building castles in the sky complete with specifications on the size of the sleeping quarters and the hours of the meals. The day for those overplanned castles may be over . . . Yet the spirit of those airy castles remains alive and precious – or so I hope. And herein lies the paradox of this anti-utopian utopian essay. I wish to save the spirit, but not the letter, of utopianism”. The spirit of utopianism is to redirect attention beyond the dull routines which prop up an uncritical acceptance of what is and which reduces the future to more of the same. It serves, as Jacoby rightly notes, an inconoclastic function. Three decades ago E.P. Thompson the English historian reached a similar conclusion when he drew a strong connection between utopia and desire. Utopianism is not about specification of solutions but rather the opening of the imagination to speculation and open exploration. “And in such adventure two things happen: our habitual values (the ‘commonsense’ of bourgeois society) are thrown into disarray. And we enter into Utopia’s proper and new-found space: the education of desire. This is not the same as ‘a moral education’ towards a given end: it is, rather, to open a way of aspiration, to ‘teach desire to desire, to desire better, to desire more, and above all to desire in a different way’ . . . Utopianism, when it succeeds, liberates desire to an uninterrupted interrogation of our values and also to its own self-interrogation”. In this education of desire the status quo is opened up to question but the challenge is not restricted to the shortcomings of the present. The utopian thinker is also free to think of ways of living that lie completely beyond what is currently envisaged. Overwhelmingly in contemporary educational thought the future is reduced to policy analysis and prescription, not to the iconoclastic disruption of current administration and procedure. The formula seems to be of the following order: future = more of the present = policy analysis and fine-tuning. “School”, “learning”, “curriculum”, “leisure”, “sport”, “work”, “art”, “vocation”; indeed all the categories common to educational analysis should be subject to utopian exploration. The challenge is that in an anti-utopian age such as ours this is less likely to occur. When it does it is likely to be circumscribed and narrowed. But this fact alone makes such exploration both more necessary and urgent.
The relation between education and utopia is an interesting one that has taken on different hues according to various native traditions: we know the significant role it played in Plato’s *Republic*. Perhaps less well known is its central role in the last of the *Bildungromans* – Hermann Hesse’s *The Glass Bead Game*. The dream of a universal language that characterises modernity finds its ultimate expression in the ideal elaborated by Hesse. His metaphor of the glass bead game serves as a kind of ultra-aesthetic language-game played by master scholars, involving all branches of knowledge and capable of reproducing the entire intellectual content of the universe. Hesse sets his futuristic pedagogical utopian novel in the province of Castalia in the year 2400 at a time after the decline and degeneration of Western culture, a process that “had been in the air . . . from the time of Nietzsche” (Hesse, 1970: 24) and had subsequently experienced a cultural and spiritual renaissance exemplified in the game. The glass bead game functions, as a richly textured metaphor, to bring together in one imaginary place symbolic logic, musicology, the computer, and a sweeping cultural synthesis that transcends its technological limits in a utopian humanist pedagogy. As one of us has argued previously:

I can think of no better metaphor with all its allusive qualities, its pedagogical possibilities and cultural prophecies than *The Glass Bead Game* to investigate the place of the university in the cultural history of symbolic logic, cybernetics and perhaps even European formalism, which underlie the present incipient development of the “mode of information”, to employ Mark Poster’s (1990) characterization, or “the Information Superhighway”, to use Al Gore’s populist term, or, more simply, “cyberspace”, to use a more critical term coined by William Gibson (1984). (Peters, 1996a: 163)

The central symbolism of the game squarely relates to the modernist dream of a universal language – a non-instrumental form of symbolic exchange guided by the *teles* of consensus and oriented to the unity of mind and purpose. In one sense it plumbs the depths of the ancient civilizations insofar as the idea of the game, as mentioned by Hesse in the “General Introduction to its History for the Layman”, represents an “eternal idea” expressed in various ways by Pythagoras, by the Hellenistic Gnostics, by the ancient Chinese and by the Arabian-Moorish cultures. Hesse mentions its prehistory in terms of scholasticism and humanism, leading to “the academies of mathematicians of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and on to the Romantic philosophies and the runes of Novalis’s hallucinatory visions” (Hesse, 1970: 16). Clearly, the abacus – the paradigm calculating device – and the *I Ching* predictive mysterious ideograms were conscious prototypes for Hesse, as was chess – that paragon of reason and strategy. Other models for the game mentioned include various musical instruments – it is described at one point as a gigantic organ with stops and pedals – and it is strongly associated with forms of musical composition such as the Bach fugue and the concerto movement. More mundanely, the history of the game is said also to be related to crossword puzzles and card games. The game in something resembling its final
form, we are told, originated simultaneously in England and Germany as a kind of memory or training exercise used by musicians and musicologists working in the new seminaries for musical theory.

Once taken over by mathematicians two to three decades later, the game developed to a higher degree of flexibility with a corresponding greater capacity for sublimation and self-consciousness. It was taken to a point where "it was capable of expressing mathematical processes by special symbols and abbreviations" (Hesse, 1970: 32) and it was applied subsequently to classical philology, to logic, to the visual arts and to architecture. Yet "what it lacked in those days was the capacity for universality, for rising above the disciplines" (Hesse, 1970: 36–37). Scholars, each according to the rules of their own disciplines, developed their own special languages using the game, but the development of its capacity for synthesis and universality had to wait another five hundred years – not a technical or formal obstacle but rather a moral one. As Hesse’s narrator explains: "Some dreamed of a new alphabet, a new language of symbols through which they could formulate and exchange their new intellectual experiences" (Hesse, 1970: 36). Under the influence of Joculator Basilienia, a Swiss musicologist, the game develops into a universal language so that it becomes possible "to reduce mathematics and music to a common denominator" (Hesse, 1970: 37). The Game of games, thus, came to its present spiritual status and pinnacle of development, taking over the role of both art and speculative philosophy as a new world language, through which players can harmoniously express previously opposing sets of values in a kind of divine unity: both law and freedom, both individual and community.

We are told at one point: "the symbols and formulas of the Glass Bead Game combined structurally, musically, and philosophically within the framework of a universal language, were nourished by all the sciences and arts, and strove to play to achieve perfection, pure being, the fullness of reality" (Hesse, 1970: 40).

What we have in Hesse’s notion of the game is no less than a cybernetic conception of self and society: an analysis based upon a finite set of mathematico-musical rules, which define the Platonic university of eternal ideas. It is a vision that looks back to Leibniz’s utopian machine, the Universal Characteristic that Hesse’s narrator acknowledges, and looks forward to anticipate the modern computer and Norbert Weiner’s conception of a universal algorithm. It simultaneously combines elements of the Faustian myth of knowledge alongside other romantic motifs and features that define idealism in the German philosophical tradition: it also re-defines the Bildungsroman and the humanist educational utopia where, once technical limits have been transcended, the search is for new moral direction. The educational vision, while it portrays the development of a gigantic learning machine that captures the essence of European formalism – the move to a greater abstraction and formality in culture – also is fundamentally oriented toward a set of aesthetic-moral processes and pursuits. Its depth and prophecy is linked to the history of humanism – not restricted to Europe nor to its Christian heritage, but broadly and ultimately to a spiritual future.

The utopias of contemporary educational futures, by comparison, are limited in their breadth and direction. Now that the question of futures is subjected to
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It own disciplinary formation and methodologies, educational futures tend to be more mundane or technical, or both, especially when they are harnessed as official policy narratives. This collection is intended both to challenge that narrowness and also to subject some of the official narratives to critical scrutiny.

EDUCATIONAL HETEROTOPIAS?

In his essay “Of Other Spaces”, Michel Foucault contrasted the notion of utopia – idealised conceptions of society that are impossible to locate in reality – with the idea of heterotopias.5 These, he suggested, were Other Spaces that functioned as socially constructed counter-sites:

There also exist, and this is probably true for all cultures and all civilisations, real and effective spaces which are outlined in the very institution of society, but which constitute a sort of counter-arrangement, of effectively realised utopia, in which all the real arrangements, all the other real arrangements that can be found within society, are at one and the same time represented, challenged and overturned: a sort of place that lies outside all places and yet is actually localizable.

In this essay Foucault flirts with the utopian tradition to emphasise, against the nineteenth century’s preoccupation with history and time (as he says themes of development, suspension, crisis, cycle), the contemporary era of space (simultaneity, juxtaposition, dispersion, distribution). Indeed, “space itself has a history in Western experience” and Foucault, tutored by structuralist methodologies and inspired by Bachelard, provides just such a history by distinguishing roughly between the “hierarchic ensemble of spaces” of the Middle Ages. The space opened up by Galileo he christens “the space of emplacement”, which exploded the cosmological space within which hierarchic ensemble of spaces (sacred and profane, protected and open, urban and rural, celestial and supercelestial) nestled. Starting with Galileo “extension was substituted for localization” and “Today the site has been substituted for extension which itself had replaced emplacement”. Foucault goes on to say “The site is defined by relations of proximity between points or elements; formally, we can describe these as series, trees or grids”. (Here think of Sartre’s “series” and Deleuze’s “rhizomes.”) He states his working hypothesis simply:

The space in which we live, which draws us out of ourselves, in which the erosion of our lives, our time and our history occurs, the space that claws and gnaws at us, is also, in itself, a heterogeneous space.

This insight is the basis for the concept heterotopias – different spaces, different sites that define our existence. He implicitly suggests that the utopian tradition emphasises a place removed in time; a no-place, a fictional space that provides normative guidance for the future. In contrast to this utopian place, Foucault nominates “heterotopias” which are real spaces.
First there are the utopias. Utopias are sites with no real place. They are sites that have a general relation of direct or inverted analogy with the real space of Society. They present society itself in a perfected form, or else society turned upside down, but in any case these utopias are fundamentally unreal spaces.

Foucault presents examples of heterotopias, and a set of principles which govern their existence – a kind of heterotopology that defines the set of relations that comprise the site, a description of the “simultaneously mythic and real contestation of the space in which we live”. He proceeds to reveal six principles as the basis for this new form of analysis. He suggests that every human culture is made up of heterotopias and in their description persists implicit social, moral and political oppositions such as private/public or pleasure/work. He generalises two types of heterotopia: there are heterotopias of crisis, such as the boarding school or military service, where young men were banished to experience their initial adolescent sexuality; and heterotopias of deviance, such as rest homes, clinics and prisons where those considered abnormal could be spatially isolated. Of course, these themes of space and Foucault’s spatial analysis foreshadow the some of the major themes that traverse his works.6

The spatial analysis is of course germane to the future of education and to an educational future that has moved from spaces of enclosure and confinement of the schoolhouse and the workhouse, through various formal architectures that accompanied the history of formal education, toward a new openness characterised by the distance mode and e-learning – from closed to open systems. This new openness that typifies globalisation, however, does not mean that heterotopic spaces disappear or that social control is diminished. On the contrary, there are new dangers and new problems to do with the spatialization of education and knowledge as spaces multiply, divide and overlap with one another; when the traditional spaces between “school”, “home” and “work” collapse and new spatial interrelationships re-define the dichotomy between the public and the private.

EDUCATIONAL FUTURES

Futures Studies is a relatively new constellation of fields that through a series of methodologies attempts to scientifically address questions of the future with the vision and understanding that we can identify important values in key areas that can improve the human condition. Much of the new futures research is international in orientation and concerned with addressing long-range global issues of sustainability, the environment, peace and security, energy use, the status of women and other global challenges. Such is the impetus of the Millennium Project established in 1996 by the American Council for the United Nations University (ACUNU), a US NGO.7 Much of the direction in this area comes from business models and methodologies such as scenario planning. The ACUNU 1997 State of the Future publication explains scenario planning as follows:

Scenarios, and indeed all future research methods, can be either exploratory or normative; that is, they can produce images of expected futures or desired
futures. Exploratory forecasts portray futures that seem plausible, given actions or inactions of key players, exogenous developments, chance, and the internal dynamics of the system under study. Exploratory forecasts respond to the question: “What do you think the future might be?”

Normative forecasts describe the hoped-for future; these forecasts also can be produced with either qualitative or quantitative methods. While the utopia literature and science fiction fit here, the methods can be quite systematic. Normative forecasts respond to the question: “What kind of future would you like to see?” (http://www.acunu.org/millennium/sof/scenario.html accessed 19 September 2005)

The publication goes on to describe a scenario as a narrative of the future “that focuses attention on causal processes and decision points” and can be judged in terms of its plausibility, internal self-consistency, and usefulness in decision making rather than its accuracy in foretelling the future. This is a huge project with is a participatory think-tank with several hundred participants supported by a array of sponsors including General Motors, Monsanto, Shell International, UNESCO and US Departments of Energy and Environmental Protection (EPA).

What is astonishing about this project is that educational futures figure little, if at all, in the advertised thinking. For instance, not one of the 15 Global Challenges directly refer to education, even though education is perhaps the foremost social means by which to bring about desired futures. The UN Millennium Development Goals, by contrast, lists achieving universal primary education as the second goal after “eradicating extreme poverty and hunger”. It could be argued that ACUNU is more oriented to “science” and “business” rather than literature and literary criticism, where narrative analysis is more advanced.

Educational futures studies require an approach which is critical especially in relation to narratives and sensitive to the questions concerning narration, the structure of narratives and the power of narrative analysis especially as it informs various forms of qualitative research that utilize narrative – case study, grounded theory, ethnography, life history, “thick description”, discourse analysis, action research. Narrative is the hallmark of historical consciousness and temporal experience, and as such has defined subjectivity and identity. Various literary genres – biography, autobiography, confession, letters, diaries, portraits, dramas, the folk-tale, the novel, the short story – have provided early epistemological models for social inquiry based on the interview, the questionnaire, and more recently the focus group. Marie-Laure Ryan in The Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative emphasizes the fundamental significance of narrative by describing what it does for human beings:

narrative is a fundamental way of organising human experience and a tool for constructing models of reality . . . ; narrative allows human beings to come to terms with the temporality of their existence . . . ; narrative is a particular mode of thinking, the mode that relates to the concrete and particular as opposed to the abstract and general . . . ; narrative creates and transmits cultural traditions,
and builds the values and beliefs that define cultural identities; narrative is a vehicle of dominant ideologies and an instrument of power . . . ; narrative is an instrument of self-creation; narrative is a repository of practical knowledge, especially in oral cultures . . . ; narrative is a mold in which we shape and preserve memories; narrative, in its fictional form, widens our mental universe beyond the actual and the familiar and provides a playfield for thought experiments . . . ; narrative is an inexhaustible and varied source of education and entertainment; narrative is a mirror in which we discover what it means to be human. (http://lamar.colostate.edu/~pwryan/narrentry.htm (accessed 4 August 2005)

In our culture, as Paul Ricoeur (1984, 1985, 1988) remarks in his landmark study *Time and Narrative*, there are two main forms of narrative: narratives as “fiction” that even if based in real events and characters, depart from reality as an exercise of imagination; and, historical narratives which while unable to do without composition seeks methodologically to attain a degree of objectivity as form of social inquiry. It is only in the last fifty years that narrative has emerged as an autonomous object of inquiry and now has invaded ethnography, medicine, law, and psychoanalysis. Indeed, it has been argued that the humanities are to be distinguished by their narrative form of explanation. Under the postmodern condition, Jean-François Lyotard (1984) argues that grand narratives (or master narratives or meta-narratives) functioned in the past to legitimate institutional and ideological forms of knowledge and are no longer credible have now given way to little personal narratives (*petit récits*). This shift has paved the way for narratives of race, class and gender and “narratives of identity” that characterizes cultural studies.

In this context we might see narratives of the future as a form of historical analysis, “a history of the present”, as Foucault might say. Utopian thought certainly occupies a special position in relation to narrative. It is encouraging the narrative analysis occupies such a central place in futures studies for it allows the humanities (and particularly philosophy) “back in” the discussion and puts narrative on equal pegging with systematicity, comprehensive and coherence that are the guides to science.

The challenge for futures theorists of education is to develop their own theoretical and methodological sophistication on this basis and to reinterpret “the prophets of postmodernity” (Marx, Nietzsche, Wittgenstein, Heidegger, Marcuse, Foucault, Lyotard, Arendt, Rorty, among others) who have sought to establish new values in an age of nihilism. These philosophers, perhaps better what scenario planning could ever achieve) provide resources in future studies for what might be called “educational postmodernity”. As Peters suggests in this volume in the age of globalization and the knowledge economy education becomes re-profiled in a technical-managerialist dystopia. As Heidegger warned us, education becomes a “resource” to be used as part of the standing reserve in the game of national economic competition. Many of the theorists who first articulated postmodern and poststructuralist accounts of education are seeking new normative orientations or attempting to marry existing socialist concepts and concerns to new approaches
that help to map educational futures. A critical approach can be adopted and adapted to educational futures, as contributors to this issue demonstrate so clearly.

It is also, interestingly, a characteristic of Third Way politics, that it defines itself not only against Thatcherism, the New Right, and Old Labour, but also against the postwar welfare state settlement by writing narratives of the future – of education, of public services and of society. In this context one might speak of Third Way Educational Futures. These futures are certainly defined in the plural and they are summed up negatively perhaps in Tony Blair’s assertion that what we face now is “the end of the comprehensive era”, the end of “one size fits all” and the beginning of specialist schools that reflect greater consumer choice and diversity. One can judge very quickly the futures orientation in Third Way education when the titles of the speeches made by David Milliband and his colleagues over the last couple of years are examined: “School for the Future: Building Educational Improvement”, “The Future Of Comprehensive Secondary Education”, “21st Century Teaching: Leading Modern Professionalism”, “Teaching in the 21st Century”, “Tomorrow’s World – The Childcare Revolution and Beyond”, “Specialist Schools and the Future of Education”, “A New Vision for Citizenship”, “Raising Aspirations in the 21st Century: The Future of Education”. The orientation toward the future of education is good political sense (although not necessarily good policy practice) in that it no longer appeals to Labour and socialist metanarratives of the past – which some would argue are becoming increasingly unbelievable, undesirable and unattainable, at least in terms of the popular imaginary, especially as the UK eases itself more and more into a US-style neo-liberal market economy. Rather than build a political constituency by reference to past nation-building myths rooted in solidarity, the new presidential style-politics based on highly successful focus group methodologies to determine the desires and wishes of floated voters, tends increasingly to claim its legitimacy on mapping and determining the future, spinning policy narratives about what “we” and our institutions can become. Policy practice is now also increasingly underwritten by future-oriented thinking and techniques – independent and government think-tanks, scenario-building, foresight, strategic planning, mission-driven assignments. To this can be added the huge alignment and rationalisation of the whole educational research enterprise to “evidence-based” policy, dedicated research centres, and national research planning of the kind represented by NERF (see the discussion of the OECD report on England’s educational R&D, in this issue).

Yet these educational futures require the most careful scrutiny, as does the rationalisation of the system of educational research. We need to problematize official futures not only of schools and other educational institutions, and the methodologies and ideologies used to construct and sustain them, but also the new metanarratives of the “knowledge economy”, “globalisation” and “free trade” that motivate and drive them. How does one contest the future? How does one contest educational futures? What are the critical tools required for doing so?
THE ORGANIZATION OF THIS BOOK

The essays collected in this book are designed to provide resources for a return to an engagement with the utopian in educational theory. They are not, of course, a substitute for utopian visions themselves. Taken as a whole the essays explore different aspects of the utopian. As editors we have not sought to impose a single theme on to writers. Each has chosen to view some aspect of utopianism from the perspective of asking how it might be brought to bear on the question of educational theory.

Ivana Milojevic opening essay is premised on the observation that all educational thinking is connected to the utopian thought since, as already noted, education is about our desires and hopes for the future. Milojevic tackles head on the contemporary judgement, noted above, that utopianism is dead, at the very least moribund. The rejects utopianism because it smacks of totalitarianism, the left, at least in the maxian tradition has had an ambiguous relationship to utopianism (as is well known Marx and Engels attacked utopianism as unscientific though the Manifesto of the Communist Party is one of the most dramatically iconoclastic works of utopian imagination ever written) and postmodern thinkers typically worry that it sets limits on the future, by privileging one form of political authority over others. Considered as the portrayal of a perfect society – uniform, orderly and singular – utopia is no longer a convincing method of social analysis. Reflecting a widespread shift in utopian studies [notes here] Milojevic argues that attention to eutopias (good if not perfect societies in which doubt and criticism are intrinsic in daily life), dystopias and heterotopias are important and relevant because they expand the reach of analysis about the future. For example, dystopian thought is valuable as a potential source of scepticism about the future and the failings that might result from pursuing particular forms of social development. At the same time to dwell excessively on dystopian portrayals is to run the risk of legitimising fear and undermining hope. In any event it is important to realise while utopian thought in a more traditional sense is now rather marginalized the impulses underlying utopianism remain and will do so as long as people are dissatisfied with the present or can envisage alternatives for the future. Within education utopian and futures imagining has, for two more than two decades now, been dominated by the agenda of neo-liberalism in its many guises. Not to engage with this ideology is to hand over the landscape of utopian and futures thought to particular dominant groups and class interests. Globalisation, the universalisation of markets as the model of all social relations and individual aspiration, neo-liberal democracy, and the apparent washing out of time and place through developments in ICT are now too easily seen as the “natural” futures. It is this naturalisation through a process of ideological colonisation of the future that so effectively obscures the utopian function served by this dominant discourse of the right and neoconservatism. Critique is not sufficient and the left must also find ways to articulate possibilities for the future. This first essay sets a context for the essays that follow.
Giroux’s essay gives this viewpoint a more specific focus. He shows how the neoliberal dystopia based on the ideology, economics and politics of the market place amounts effectively to a war against democracy understood as participation in the public sphere. As he puts it this dystopia is shaped by the making the market the “master template of human affairs” and thereby undermining, not just the notion of informed and critical citizenship, but of hope for anything beyond the current state of affairs. Giroux attempts to give an answer to this end of history pessimism by reference to a pedagogy of hope. It is clearly not sufficient in Giroux’s opinion to engage in anti-theoretical action, but at the same time exercising an empty theoreticism is to give into the prevailing fashions of the academy. His essay then explores the ways in which pedagogy can make political by connecting scholarly and popular resources in a project that breaks the dominance of neoliberal ideological construction. The core of this project is a project whose outcome is educated hope, a concept he borrows from the well known utopian theorist, Ruth Levitas. Educated hope, as the term suggests, is not a directionless and objectless desire for a utopian world but a mode of pedagogy in which politics, ethics, civic education and participation merge together to develop and support “a belief that different futures are possible”. Echoing Milojvec’s major theme Giroux also thinks that “utopian thinking rejects a politics of certainty and holds open matters of contingency, context and indeterminacy”.

Locating the ground of utopian impulse in the public sector Smith shows how, in the particular case of the Bush administration, notions like public knowledge are subject to cheating, deception and misrepresentation. As a consequence education as a civic responsibility becomes very difficult, to the point of being fraudulent. This “enfraudening” of common goods, as Smith calls it, is supported by a myth of modernity which in fact, in the name of emancipation, fails to register the cultural experience and history of those who lie outside its operating frameworks, particularly those suffering under it. In this sense the modern imperialism is closed in on itself, the source of policies that turn freedom into unfreedom, anti-terrorism into terrorism and peace-seeking into war. All this precipitates a pedagogical crisis for teachers who in a world based on bullying, untruth and a lack of trust are apparently left without resources with which to teach in the name of freedom. Smith proposes a way forward in the utopian grain, by suggesting that through the curriculum pedagogy must seek out the suffering of Others, “those whose very suffering stands in judgement of the failure of emancipative reason’s ultimate claims”. In this respect his position and that of Giroux are complimentary. It also lies close to the utopian impulse behind the recent suggestion by the late Susan Sontag that perception, judgement and learning must reach well beyond sympathy, to the grounds where the teacher and learner understand how one’s supposed freedom is implicated in the suffering of others. Truth is always more than one nation is the utopian challenge that a transmodern curriculum must meet.

Which bring us to the relation between utopia and ideology. Zeus Leonardo starts with Louis Althusser presenting his theory of ideology in terms of four distinctions around the concept of distortion: “ideology as pre-scientific, humanist,
like-the-unconscious, and finally, as having material effects”. He then mines the tradition of utopia starting with More and focusing on the socialists, Saint-Simon and then Fourier. Finally, he develops in outline a theory of ideology as utopia, or, as he says “the utopian moment of ideology critique”. His important argument is that “ideology critique often projects an alternative reality, a utopia, and that utopian thinking is inherently a form of ideology critique”.

It is a tribute in part to the success of the anti-utopian liberal legacy forged by thinkers like Hayek, Popper, Berlin and Talmon that utopian thought continues to invoke a certain skepticism. As Jacoby has shown and as Olssen points out in his paper liberalism has overwhelmingly set itself against all forms of utopian modelling and theory. Based on the equation of utopianism and totalitarianism their analyses were typically lacking in either historical or empirical insight and were based on oversimplified and one-sided notions of the individual, the state, freedom, liberty and equality, as well as occluding the consequences of markets. Responding against Stalinist and fascist regimes, and after WWII in the context of a cold war these thinkers failed to see the deeper limits of liberalism more generally, including the tendency to smuggle in by the back door notions such as ideal and planning, that had just exited by the front door. Olssen helpfully reminds the reader that much of this thought is severely limited, both in terms of analysis and history, in what it can offer to contemporary analysis social and educational analysis.

As Olssen observes totalitarianism far from being the product of utopian fancy, philosophical ideal or social engineering is much better understood as “the absence of democracy, or the conditions which enable democracy to flourish. Olssen sets out to provide some very necessary resources for utopian imagination in education. Centrally these must focus on understanding the mechanisms of democracy in the institutional structure of society understood within a global context. Liberalism has underwritten a depthless conception of democracy that simply does not have the resources to address the democratic project. The new utopian thinking that is needed must look to deepening democracy, of seeing it as transformative project shaped by participation. Democracy as utopia entails imaginative construction in the areas of: safety and security, freedom and autonomy, inclusion and participation, fairness and justice, and equality of resources and capabilities. To deepen democracy utopian research must, in Olssen’s view pay attention to equality, the role of the state in developing the conditions of positive freedom, the invigoration of civil society and in recognising again, as Dewey so long ago now reminded us, that education is fundamental to democracy. It is time for social and educational theorists to leave old liberal inhibitions and prejudices behind and once again take up the project of utopianism.

If the anti-utopian liberals attacked utopia from a profoundly ahistorical point of view, Robert Davis reminds us of the historical roots within which educational utopian thought and practice emerges and contests dominant discourses. Utopia as process contrasts with the presentation of static spatial models, in the style of Thomas More. Viewed as process utopia serves among other things, as Davis quotes Raymond Williams, “to strengthen and confirm existing feelings and rela-
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tionships which are not at home in the existing order and cannot be lived through it”. Taking Scottish educational history as the case study Davis shows the oppositional potential of utopian thought. In what might be called the standard view, Scotland has been used to illustrate the relationship between the growth of mass education and the influence of the Enlightenment faith in reason and progress. Davis questions this account of Scottish educational history by highlighting the impact upon it of utopian concepts of education and society from which Scottish Enlightenment thought recoiled. Speaking from within the dominant intellectual tradition Adam Smith, in the Wealth of Nations, gave vivid support to a plain and practical public education designed to inculcate basic skills and work-related attitudes in the emerging industrial working classes, while simultaneously ensuring a compliant and non-rebellious population that knew its place. Smith’s proposals were the political economic expression of rationality. Davis traces an alternative utopian history – sometimes subterranean and individualistic, on occasions more overt, communal and working class in its politics – that defines a liberal-radical educational critique of Enlightenment rationality. In the traditions of educational dissent Davis finds weapons that utopians can use in calling capitalist education to task.

Christine Forde turns a utopian eye towards another area of educational criticism and speculation, specifically to the so-called “gender problem”. Access and attainment is an area in which policy and debate is profoundly gendered. On the liberal model struggles for women’s rights and access to education have served both a progressive function and been premised on relatively unquestioned conceptions of “woman”, “man”, “girl”, “boy”, “sex” and “gender”. While Forde acknowledges the advances achieved with in liberalism she also thinks an insufficiently utopian perspective has progressively hobbled this agenda. Starting out from Ernst Bloch’s categories of the “not yet” and the “not yet become” Forde offers the reader an excursion through feminist writings that historically and ideologically open up the concept of gender to scrutiny. Of particular interest in this context is her commitment to a mode of thought that, as evident throughout the essays in this book, emphasises utopia as a form of experimental thinking rather than as providing blueprints for the future. In the case of feminism this means thinking in a way that goes “beyond the perimeters of patriarchy” and which thereby entertains alternative cultural definitions of gender, to the point of reconstructing the concept of gender altogether. Drawing principally on Julia Kristeva and Judith Butler, Forde shows that categories in this area are far from stable and it is this theoretical insight that provides the grounds for a genuine utopianism. Her utopianism envisages gender as performance understood in terms of agency directed against the dominant ideologies of femininity and masculinity. The core utopian idea is to break beyond the rigid and patriarchal categories in educational thinking that act to marginalize either boys or girls. Forde’s essay points to a utopia characterised by the “… the possibility of creating an educational process in which gender is no longer a significant issue”.

Doret de Ruyter is concerned that with the purported decline of the grand narratives and a narrow instrumentalism in education policy that there has been a
loss of faith in ideals and in the prospects for utopian education. By contrast she fiercely defends the role of utopia and ideals in education and begins by examining both the use of these concepts and their connections, arguing for a conception of the ideal person. De Ruyter also closely examines the reasons advanced in the literature for the importance of utopia and ideals: they serve as regulative principles and the best image by which to evaluate current practices; they provide encouragement to follow rules and to adhere to norms, especially important for “youngsters” in the process of growing up; they can function as compensation (as in day dreams). She also scrutinizes the alleged dangers: “utopias are totalitarian and therefore necessarily repressive and oppressive”; “utopias cannot be achieved morally; people need to be indoctrinated … or be forced to be loyal to them for external reasons” (as in the examples of Plato’s Republic, communist utopias or Nazi Germany). De Ruyter questions whether these are necessary or contingent, taking issue with Isaiah Berlin’s essay “On the Pursuit of the Ideal”. Finally, she argues for non-totalitarian utopias as constituting regulative ideals in an attempt to “save” utopias and ideals in/of education.

John Freeman-Moir uses Nozick’s methodological idea of a meta-utopian framework “as a lens through which to illuminate Morris’s approach to utopia” focusing on his News from Nowhere, at the same time as recognizing that they were very different thinkers. He argues: “Nozick offers an attractive methodological rationale for utopianism in general that Morris, the libertarian marxian, would have found substantially congenial; despite Nozick’s attack against equality (Morris’s core value)”. Morris, however, went beyond Nozick to imagine “what an actual utopia might look like and how it might function”. Freeman-Moir examines, in particular, Morris’s resolution of the questions of work, upon which so much else depends – not least, leisure, art, freedom and democratic ways of living.

Michael F.D. Young is interested in the question “What principles should underpin the curriculum of the future?” and asks whether there will continue to be a separation between formal and everyday knowledge, and whether the curriculum will be organised in terms of the disciplines or rather will it be based on practical knowledge and social skills demanded by the global knowledge economy. He turns to Muller’s contrasting principles of “insularity” (difference rather than continuity) and “hybridity” (unity and continuity). In his chapter Young tries to “avoid both the ahistorical conservatism of traditional insularity and the uncertain consequences of hybridity and its ultimate renunciation of any distinctive pedagogic or epistemological criteria”. In this endeavour he turns to a discussion of and comparison between Durkheim and Vygotsky, both of whom emphasised the differentiation of knowledge.

In his chapter Alan Scott investigates “Theatre and the discourse on utopia” to inquire into “the twentieth century debate about the purpose and nature of theatre in its relation to the social setting” and asking the question whether theatre is essentially a reflection of present social circumstances or whether it can be radically transformative, especially in the struggle for human emancipation. Scott begins with Tynan’s debate with Ionesco in the late 1950s centring on social realism and the emptiness of absurdist theatre. On one side, faith in man and reason; on the
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other, the fragility of man and uncertainty. These are the terms of debate that Scott
takes as a point of departure for recalling the history of theatre in the later part of
the twentieth century – a history bedeviled with the struggles between Enlight-
enment notions and postmodernist presentiments, between utopians dreams and

Leonard Waks develops the concept of the “networked school” as a recon-
struction “for metropolitan education in the computer network era”. His project
is clearly utopian and also practical, for he is concerned about the growing in-
equalities and the isolation faced by ethnic minority students in metropolitan
areas and the potential of computer networks for alleviating these problems. He
begins by looking at “equal citizenship” in education and the legacy of the “com-
mon school” and its role in progressive education in the US, before defining the
“networked common school”. He then systematically outlines the components of
the “networked common school”: “the local front line, and regional back-line,
facilities and providers, and the regional significant learning activities”.

Aharon Aviram returns to philosophers as utopian thinkers to discern struc-
tural and logical commonalities in their work. He moves on to consider philo-
sophical educational utopias and “the necessity of meta-narratives in an uncharted
land”. Aviram defends the metanarrative and he emerging need for the philosoph-
ical expertise at the formation of meta-narratives, arguing “It is not the concept
of meta-narrative or the existence of meta-narrative(s) that is problematic, but the
attitude towards it/them”. He then goes to to develop the structure of a utopia on
the desired education in postmodern democracies.

Faruk Öztürk analyzes several important examples revealing progress and
types of the utopia concept in Turkish intellectual life to examine why and how
the Turkish intellectual world perceives the utopia concept from a different per-
spective. In addition to this Öztürk contradicts the claim that there have been no
utopian movements in Turkish intellectual world. His study details several utopian
movements and examines the relation of utopian thought in relation to education
during Turkish enlightenment process of the Tanzimat Period to the Republican
Period. Öztürk also reflects on several pedagogues and philosophers during this
historical process and discusses some likely similarities and interactions between
educational ideals of newly founded Turkish Republic and utopian exceptions.

Michael A. Peters’ chapter “Educational Policy Futures” begins with the
question of policy futures in education especially in face of the impacts of global-
ization and the knowledge economy. He examines the knowledge economy as an
example of futures discourse and provides a brief analysis of scenario planning
and foresight planning, before providing two examples of futures research in edu-
cation: the UK’s National Educational Research Forum (NERF) and The Scottish
Council Foundation’s initiatives. He makes a parting reference to what he calls
the “prophets of postmodernity” – a group of philosophers, including Nietzsche,
Heidegger and Wittgenstein, among others, who provides sources for a critical
approach to future studies in education.

This collection focuses on utopias after Thomas More with a strong focus on
the twentieth century and the unfolding of contemporary events, although some
contributions hark back to the Enlightenment, to the socialist and sociological traditions. At the same time we should remember there are forms of utopianism before Thomas More not only in the Greek texts of Hesiod, Ovid and Virgil but also in religious texts and specifically in the texts of the prophets, the monastics and in the utopian satires. More’s utopia reinvented a genre of literature in the sixteenth century that later became a literary reference point for works that emerged much later: not only Rabelais and Montaigne but also Shakespeare (*The Tempest*), Bacon (*New Atlantis*), Swift (*Gulliver’s Travels*). In the nineteenth century we saw the emergence of communal societies as utopias and a strong emphasis on works in the socialist and positivist traditions: Fourier, Saint-Simon, Owen, Marx, Morris. This legacy has continued into the twentieth century with depictions of utopian and dystopian societies with the works of Wells, Huxley, Orwell, Skinner, Goodman (for an excellent selection see Claeys and Sargent, 1999). In most of these accounts, education occupies an important place and plays an indispensable role. Education has often been conceptualized in terms of transformation and change, of socialization and social mobility, of freedom and control – elements that provide the tools for analyses of edutopias. This collection is a small step for reinvigorating the utopian tradition in education and for encouraging new utopian thinking in education.

NOTES

1 For example see the New York Public Library Resources on Utopia that provide a selective bibliography dating from the 16th century: (http://www.nypl.org/utopia/primarysources.html#20).

2 For the full text of *Utopia* see: (http://www.d-holliday.com/tmore/utopia.htm).


4 See for instance Utopia on the Internet (http://users erois.com/jonwill/utopian.htm).


6 For a discussion of these themes and their relevance to education, see Peters, 1996b, 2001a, 2003.


8 See The Real Utopias Project (http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/~wright/RealUtopias.htm), which requires an educational dimension and the recent conference held at the University of Strathclyde entitled “Technotopias” (http://www.strath.ac.uk/conferences/technotopias/), which had an educational stream. See also WWW Resources on Alternative and Utopian Communities (http://faculty.plattsburgh.edu/richard.robbins/legacy/utopia www_resource.html); Utopia Journal (http://www.utoronto.ca/utopia/journal/index.html) and the course at the University of Colorado (http://www.cc.colorado.edu/Dept/EN/Courses/EN203Toooley/#1).

9 All these speeches and others given by ministers are available at the official website: (http://www.dfes.gov.uk/speeches/index.cfm).

REFERENCES


HEGEMONIC AND MARGINALISED EDUCATIONAL UTOPIAS IN THE CONTEMPORARY WESTERN WORLD

THE DEATH OF UTOPIA?

Historical overviews of utopian thinking have a predictable story line, argues influential utopian historian Krishan Kumar (1987, p. vii):

One is bounced through the ancients – the biblical prophets, Plato and the Greeks; hurried throughout the Middle Ages, with a glance at Augustine; served up More, Campanella and Bacon as a substantial dish; then finished off with the nineteenth-century socialists: often with a coda which proclaims or laments the death of utopia in our own century.

Arguments that aim to explain this death of utopia in the 20th century western world usually run along two main lines. The first set of arguments focuses on countless failed utopian social experiments. Most significantly, the collapse of socialist/communist utopian dreams, the pursuit of which led to totalitarian Stalinism, Maoism and so on, apparently hammered the final nail into the coffin of utopia. According to these arguments, awareness of the emergence of such “totalitarian nightmares” was compounded by the effects on the western psyche of two “world” wars in Europe, thus contributing to the general disillusionment with the utopian as well as to the emergence of anti-utopian sentiment.

The second set of arguments, paradoxically, focuses on utopian successes. Due to advances in technology and in general knowledge, almost “any form of the concrete world, of human life, any transformation of the technical and natural environment is a possibility” (Marcuse, 1970, p. 62). What numerous utopians dreamed in the past – societies where abundance is the norm, for example – has materialised in the so-called “post-scarcity society” (at least in western OECD nations). It could then be argued that some societies finally live in “utopia now”:

The greatest irony of the concept of Utopia is that people are still searching for it when, at the dawn of the 21st century, most citizens of the world’s industrial democracies are already living in one [utopia]. If we could communicate with even the wealthiest people who lived much before 1900, and told them we live in a time when even ordinary people have clean clothes and houses, nutritious food and potable water, the freedom to quit any job we dislike, the ability to hear symphonic music and watch dramas without leaving home, and vehicles to transport us anywhere in the world in a matter of hours, who can doubt that they would cry out, ‘you live in paradise!’? (Anonymous, 2000, p. 12)
So on the one hand, utopia is seen to have disappeared because it has failed miserably to bring positive social change. On the other hand, utopia is seen to have failed because it is no longer needed.

In the context of mainstream politics, interestingly enough, utopia has been “killed off” by both left and right, by radicals and conservatives alike, though for different reasons. For conservatives, the utopian demand for radical transformation, rather than slow and more manageable piecemeal reform, is fundamentally flawed. They have generally argued that:

... grand designs for social reconstruction are nearly always disasters. While contemporary social institutions may be far from perfect, they are generally serviceable. At least, it is argued, they provide the minimal conditions for social order and stable interactions. These institutions have evolved through a process of slow, incremental modification as people adapt social rules and practices to changing circumstances. The process is driven by trial and error much more than by conscious design, and by and large those institutions which have endured have done so because they have enduring virtues. This does not preclude institutional change, even deliberate institutional change, but it means that such change should be piecemeal, not wholesale ruptures with existing arrangements. (Wright, 1999, para. 4)

An article published in *Time* a couple of years ago (Hughes, 2000, pp. 84–85) is typical of such negative attitudes towards utopia. Hughes argues that utopia is necessarily about failure because its subjects are “the fallacies and delusions of human hope” (p. 84). He also argues that “utopia means conformity, a surrender of the individual will to the collective or the divine” (ibid.) and, as such, utopia is basically for “authoritarians and weaklings” (ibid.). In the article, both nazism and communism are connected to 19th century utopian experiments and while some might think “that to be deprived of a life in Utopia may be a loss, a sad failure of human potential” this can be the case only until they “consider how unspeakably awful the alternative would be” (p. 85).

But even those interested in radical social transformations have attacked utopia. Karl Marx himself used it as a weapon “in the fight between Marxism and non-Marxian socialism” (Buber quoted in Ozmon, 1969, p. v). That Marx’s thought had all the elements of the utopian (including its dystopian downfall) is now rarely contested. But Marx:

... used this concept to differentiate between his scientific socialism and what he felt were the dreamy abstractions of others. The opposing faction was thus labeled by Marx as ‘utopian’. To a large extent, Buber adds, this fight between the Marxists and the non-Marxists has conditioned our understanding of the world today. (Ozmon, 1969, p. v)

The battle between the “scientific” and “realistic” approaches, and the “utopian” significantly influenced political debates of the 20th century. Somewhere in that process, utopian was simultaneously equated with “unrealistic, naïve and unfeasible”. Being labeled “utopian” would consequently deligitimize a political project, by default.
The latest attack on utopianism has come out of postmodernism. Most postmodernists, “in the tradition of Foucault . . . generally refuse to offer a vision of the future” argues Fendler (1999, p. 185). Unlike modernists, they believe that offering a vision “such as providing a solution, ideal or utopian hope . . . would set limits on possibilities for the future” (ibid.). In addition, they believe that offering a vision of the future means “to assume a position of political authority (intellectual as center)”, a position that is generally declined on “ethical grounds” (ibid.). The allocation of utopia to the dustbins of history has apparently been completed.

But is utopia really dead? And, more importantly, do we still need it?

Survival of Utopia

The answers to these questions depend partly on the way utopia is defined and understood. As John Carey (1999, p. xi) argued, “utopia” is variously understood to mean both “nowhere” or “no-place” as well as a “good place” or a “perfect place”. Understood in the latest sense as “a place, state or condition ideally perfect in respect of politics, laws, customs, and conditions” (The Oxford English Dictionary, 1989, p. 371, emphasis added) that can actually be achieved, utopia is pretty much outdated. There are very few places left (for example in some religious futures visions) where such overt utopianism can be found. Although the idea of a perfect society in the future still inspires some, such ideas have, in general (and rightfully), lost legitimacy. “Classical” utopian thinking and its preoccupation with uniformity, order and singularity of truth has by now been abandoned. Equally problematic and similarly abandoned is the ideal of the creation of “perfect societies” – inhabited by “perfect”, “rational”, “selfless” humans – that exclude “real people” (Carey, 1999) and include only the right, ideal, utopian types. This is because such utopianism is clearly not only unrealistic (as it aims to achieve elusive perfection), it can also be dangerous. It is such an interpretation of utopia, that, as argued by Hudson (2000, p. 4), has the capacity (by opting for “maximal value orientation”) to encourage human beings to “give vent to totalist adolescent psychological states” and provide “an illusory basis for human action”. Furthermore, such a utopia is:

. . . a form of subjectivism which ignores the fact that we cannot reshape the world in our own image. It is irrational in its refusal to acknowledge objective reality, immature in its inability to realise the limited nature of the possible, and irresponsible in its failure to understand the role of fallibility in the realisation of the good. (ibid.)

Most critics of utopianism assume only this definition of utopia. But utopia has also matured and been transformed, surviving in many other forms, even those that aim to oppose it. John Carey (1999, p. xi) argues that “strictly speaking, imaginary good places and imaginary bad places are all utopias, or nowheres”. That is, understood as “nowhere” or “no-place” utopia incorporates both imaginary “good places” (eutopias) as well as imaginary “bad places” (dystopias) (ibid.) – and both of these forms still significantly inform views of the future as well as actions taken
in the present. In addition, although aiming to end utopia, postmodernism has produced yet another utopian form, that of a multiplicity of heterotopias. Lastly, many narratives about the future that aim to represent “realistic” approaches (as in technological, scientific determinism) also incorporate utopia – that is, what is desired and hoped for. Such approaches are disguised as crypto utopias; nonetheless, they also incorporate “prescriptive and improved imagined states of both collective and/or individual being” (Milojevic, 2002, p. 45). As such, they too incorporate the true meaning of utopia.

**Dystopia**

The current prevalence of dystopia is hard to dispute. The 20th century western world has witnessed the emergence of a distinctive dystopian genre and the prevalence of dystopian images in the media. Both in fiction and especially in the news, images of “natural disasters, accidents, crime, war, disease, social injustice . . . convey a picture of a world where nothing works – in short, dystopia now” (Jennings, 1996, p. 212). The prevalence of such dystopian thinking has had a profound negative impact on both the general population as well as on young people, as Hutchinson (1996), Slaughter (1998) and Hicks and Holden (1995) argue. The main problem with the prevalence of the dystopian genre is its capacity to legitimize fears while deligitimazing hope. As argued by Boulding (1995, p. 100), people want to be “realistic” but they take it as “axiomatic that fears are realistic and hopes unrealistic”.

Another influential utopian theorist, Ernst Bloch, also saw problems with the prevalence of the dystopian. Bloch (1986, p. 3) argued that the future dimension always contains both dystopia and utopia, that is, both what is feared or what is hoped for. But he also felt that it is hope that is “superior to fear”, because it is:

… neither passive like the latter, not locked into nothingness. The emotion of hope goes out of itself, makes people broad instead of confining them, cannot know nearly enough of what it is that makes them inwardly aimed, of what may be allied to them outwardly. The work of this emotion requires people who throw themselves actively into what is becoming, to which they themselves belong. (Bloch, 1986, pp. 3–4)

But while this may be so, our societies do need dystopian thinking, providing such thinking represents insights arising from healthy skepticism. In this respect, Jennings (1996, p. 211) argues that dystopian thinking takes two basic forms or functions. It can be expressed as a description of “a place or condition in which everything is as bad as possible”, or, it can take the form of anti-utopias. Jennings further argues that in the former, dystopias have the important function of emphasizing “the serious problems that may result from deliberate policies, indecision and indifference, or simply bad luck in humanity’s attempts to manage its affairs” (ibid.). However as anti-utopias, dystopias are “satirical or prophetic warnings against the proposed ’improvement’ of society by some political faction, class interest, technology, or other artifact” (ibid.). In this latter sense dystopias can
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thus “poison our outlook on the present, or even prompt us to give up trying to do better” (ibid).

So, rather than debating the merits of utopia vs. dystopia, it may be more important to take a critical view of both dystopian (based on fear) and utopian (based on hope) visions. This would help us to balance the need to “prepare for the worst with a desire to achieve the best” (Jennings, 1996, p. 212). But, as explained by Boulding earlier, this critical view of dystopian thinking is still missing. Dystopias have come to represent the normative discourse about the future; this may be especially due to the influence the mainstream science fiction movie genre (in large part communicating dystopian images of the future) exerted onto western consciousness during the 20th century. The main function this has had is in seeing our present as not so bad after all, effectively diminishing desire for radical social change.

Eutopia and Heterotopia

The critical evaluation of utopia, on the other hand, has resulted in the emergence of two new concepts – eutopias (decisively good not perfect places) and heterotopias (as places of otherness). The shift from understanding utopias as “perfect societies” to utopias that are marked by self-doubt and questioning is implicit in the increased use of the term eutopia. This term implies that while it is not possible to create perfect societies, we could still hope to create better ones, improvements on the past and the present. The role of eutopias is invaluable. They are spaces for speculation, social dreaming, subversion and critique, the intellectual expansion of possible futures, and expression of a desire for different (and better) ways of being.

Heterotopia is equally important. Partially developed by Michel Foucault in his article “Of Other Spaces” (1986), heterotopia was initially to mean ‘real places’ that exist in every culture and every civilization. For Foucault (1986, p. 27), heterotopia is “a space of illusion … a space that is other”. It is also a counter-site, or “a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted” (p. 22). Literally translated as other or different place, this term has more recently come to denote imaginary places of otherness, multiplicity and diversity. While Foucault’s conceptualization of heterotopias is “frustratingly incomplete, inconsistent, incoherent” (Soja, 1996, p. 162), their importance lies in Foucault’s insistence on the plurality of spaces of otherness. Foucault’s heterotopias are “narrowly focused on peculiar microgeographies, nearsighted and near-sited, deviant and deviously apolitical” (Soja, ibid.), but the concept has since evolved to reconceptualise utopia by including flexibility, questioning, and work in progress. Although initially used to counterpose utopia, the concept of heterotopia has since become one of many evolved forms of utopia. Such a conceptualization is extremely important in every pluralistic society – and every society is always in essence pluralistic – because it can open up the possibility of developing alternative discourse. Critically viewing
utopia has thus resulted in a new understanding of utopia as “self, limiting, partial and plural” (Alexander, 2001, p. 579), and as such represents an attempt to include diversity and chaos in utopianism.

On the question of whether we still need utopia, it is clear that while abandonment of utopia as a blueprint for the ideal, perfect and uniform society is a good idea, there is still the need for dystopias of critique, heterotopias of diversity and eutopias of improvement. This need is particularly felt by various marginalized social groups. As Fred Polak argued thirty years ago (1973, p. 172), although utopian visions are usually created by the intellectual elite, “the utopia is really on the side of Don Quixote and not Don Carlos”. Almost seventy years ago, Mannheim (1936) made a similar argument about who, in fact, gains from labeling utopia as unrealistic, naïve and impossible. According to him (1936, pp. 176–177), it is the representatives of a given order who will “label as utopian all conceptions of existence which from their point of view can in principle never be realized”. So even if many of the earlier utopian ideals are realized, in the context of a highly hierarchical world, there will always be a social group in need of utopia – as an expression of the hope that the future can, indeed, be different.

The Politics of Utopia: Labeled and Overt vs. Crypto Utopias

Hope for a different future lingers in most historical and contemporary narratives on social and educational change. And at any given time in history, there are numerous, often competing utopian and dystopian visions that are constantly being negotiated, locally and globally. In that process, not all social groups have the opportunity to exercise equal power and contribute towards the “universalisation” of utopian ideals. Thus, certain utopian visions are always privileged, defining what becomes the dominant image of the future. In our present historical moment, it is predominantly cyber-utopia and the utopia of free and open markets that have become the privileged utopian discourse. Of course, discourses on a “post-industrial”, “information society” and on a “globalised”, “pan-capitalist” world are rarely termed as “utopian”. Rather, they are seen to form “rationalistic” and “realistic” futures where discussion about the desired is apparently taken out of the equation. As such they represent what could be termed crypto-utopia, or utopia that is hidden, disguised, veiled, concealed, covert. While they purport to communicate the “truth about the future”, such “realistic” futures in fact also subtly promote implicit assumptions about the nature of future society (high-tech, globalised) and impose these views on other futures discourses. All other discourses about the future are made to adjust to and negotiate with these, arguably, most-likely futures. On the other hand, marginalized alternatives remain virtually unknown and are rarely debated. Examples include the “popularity” of Elise Boulding’s vision of a gentle/androgynous society, Riane Eisler’s partnership society/gylany or Sri Aurobondo’s “the coming of the Spiritual Age” as compared to the ideas of “post-industrial” and “information” society.

To conclude, despite all the attempts to “kill it off”, utopia has survived well into the 21st century. It has matured, transformed and taken on a multiplicity of
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forms, including those that apparently negate it. But although utopian thinking (either explicit or implicit) is almost always there whenever “future” is brought into the discussion, this is not always recognized. Not all utopias are born equal. Some succeed in convincing people about their inevitability, masking themselves as destined, unavoidable and “realistic” futures. In order to constitute the main “truth” about the future, these hegemonic narratives depend heavily on prediction and determinism. Predictions about the future usually take the form of trend identification and analysis that is, in turn, often based on technological and economic determinism. At other times, determinism is backed by a belief in the ubiquitous character of historical and social structures that leave little space for human agency. What distinguishes hegemonic utopian and futures narratives from other, counter or alternative ones, is their capacity to convince others of the inevitability of a particular future. Hegemonic futures thus eliminate alternatives not by making them “illegal, immoral or unpopular”, but by making them “invisible and therefore irrelevant” (Postman, 1993, p. 48). The desire to abandon utopianism is thus political rather than a decision taken “with one’s feet firmly on the ground”.

UTOPIAN THINKING IN EDUCATION

Futures and utopian thinking in education has, in general, paralleled the developments described above. Overt utopianism in education has not completely disappeared, but it has been marginalized and is no longer a “legitimate” discourse. Since educational discourse in the present historical moment is “organized around a totalizing principle in a paradigm that is called ‘analytic’, ‘rationalist’, or ‘scientific’” (Fendler, 1999, p. 170), utopianism is, in general, considered “passe”. As argued by Armstrong (1996):

Hardly anyone talks about educational utopias anymore. We seem to be too caught up with test scores, basic skills, teacher burnout, school violence, and so-called excellence to be concerned with visions of what our schools really could be at their best. The early 1970s gave rise to exciting books like George Leonard’s Education and Ecstasy and John Mann’s Learning to Be, which painted fantasy pictures of futuristic schools that educated the total spectrum of human capability. In Leonard’s book, children used computer-assisted technology to interact with humanity’s rich collection of symbol systems. Mann’s book described a utopian school where children attended “empathy classes” and simulated trips to Mars. Just 20 years later, some of these fantasies seem laughably outdated, whereas others are just now being realized. In their time, however, these books revealed a freshness of vision and an unabashed impulse to explore the heights of possibility in education. We just don’t seem to do much exploring in this hardheaded era. (Armstrong, 1996, para. 1)

Numerous other authors (e.g. Giroux, 2003; Luke, 2002; McLaren, 1998) attest to the similar lack of space for utopian imagining and the construction of normative large-scale ethical and political narratives. The results of such separation between educational goals and strategies and e/utopian futures imaging has been well
documented. For example, as argued by Allan Luke (2002, p. 50), neo-liberal educational governance and the new globalised political economy of education have colluded with leftist skepticism toward grand narratives:

Taken together, these two ostensibly opposite forces can set the practical and administrative conditions for a fragmentation of the educational work of teaching and learning. This fragmentation is achieved both through the narrow instrumental technicism of a test or package-driven classroom, and through an overly developed epistemological sensitivity to the local, the ‘cultural’ and the diasporic that eschews grand constructions of discipline, field and discourse and thereby effectively narrows the curriculum to parochial concerns.

Similar arguments are developed by McLaren (1998, pp. 439 & 435):

The leftist agenda now rests almost entirely on an understanding of asymmetric gender and ethnic relations . . . The educational Left is finding itself without a revolutionary agenda for challenging inside and outside the classrooms of the nation the effects and consequences of the new capitalism . . .

In the face of the “the current lack of Utopian and the postmodern assault on the unified subject of the Enlightenment tradition” (ibid., p. 444), what has resulted is a “political paralysis”, at least at the left end of the political spectrum. Modernity, stemming from the Enlightenment tradition, has not been “destroyed by alternative visions, but by the collapse of all visions; everything goes, but nothing much counts” (Giddens, 1992, p. 21). To fill in that vacuum a “new alliance” and a “new power block” have formed (Apple, 2000, p. 226) – in the USA in particular and in developed western countries in general. This new power block:

. . . combines multiple fractions of capital that are committed to neoliberal marketized solutions to educational problems, neoconservative intellectuals who want a ‘return’ to higher standards and a ‘common culture’, authoritarian, populist, religious fundamentalists who are deeply worried about secularity and the preservation of their own traditions, and particular fractions of the professionally oriented new middle class who are committed to the ideology and techniques of accountability, measurement, and ‘management’. (ibid.)

Most importantly, this new block has utilised a particular image of the romantic past to fill the vacuum created by disintegration of the old and lack of articulation of the new futures narratives. As argued by Apple (ibid., emphasis added):

Its overall aims are in providing the educational conditions believed necessary both for increasing international competitiveness, profit, and discipline and for returning us to a romanticized past of the ‘ideal’ home, family, and school.

But would neo-liberal discourses be so influential if they had not incorporated, and indeed appropriated, elements of the desired and the hoped for? The next part of this article discusses utilization of particular futures imaging developed by this new alliance. The argument will be made that the success of neo-liberal politics was partially due to their ability to capture the public imagination, to offer a blueprint, a prescriptive and improved imagined state of individual and/or collective
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being. This vision had to be disguised, however, because overt utopianism, as discussed previously, was already undermined.

Perhaps it is not coincidental that a lack of new utopias coming from the left of the political spectrum influenced strengthening of utopias coming from the right. Until very recently, both left and right relied on “modernist notions of progress to justify their theoretical, empirical, and political strategies” (Popkewitz, 1998, p. xiii). Popkewitz (p. xiv) argues that this has been done without reflective examination and with “almost missionary zeal” in order to obtain the “salvation” of the masses through education.

The idea that education, and other social institutions, can be transformed rationally and in ways that “enhance human wellbeing and happiness has a long and controversial history” (Wright, 1999, para. 3). In one of the rare books that explicitly focus on the connection between utopias and education, Utopias and Education (1969), Howard Ozmon has argued that utopian thought played an important part in influencing educational thought in the west. He points at ways in which utopian thought has influenced education in the past and has also asserted that utopians have, by and large, placed a high priority upon education.

In addition, “most utopian writers not only have a high regard for education but are educationists themselves” (p. x). That education has always been a utopian measure par excellence (Hertzler, 1965), Ozmon (1969, p. ix) explains by stating that:

[As utopians believed] … that the great social problems of a society cannot be solved without changing the entire structure of the society within which these problems reside … they saw a twofold necessity for education, first, for the purpose of educating man [sic!] to the need for great and important changes, and secondly, they saw education as a vehicle for enabling man to adjust to these changes.

Can western education thus be separated from the tradition that created it in the first place? And, as there is hardly a geographical or psychic space left that is not being imprinted with both western modernist views of progress and development as well as with western educational models, where can spaces of “otherness” and new imaginary “nowheres” be found?

UTOPIA IS DEAD, LONG LIVE UTOPIA: GLOBALISATION AND NEW ICTS

Quite often, globalisation is represented not so much as a historical tendency or a complex process, but as an outcome: a “new order” (Dicken et al., 1997, p. 158)

At precisely the same moment that the planet is being constructed within the powerful, pervasive all consuming logic of the market, there is a second order language, a fairy tale … that suggests in Utopian terms new possibilities, in particular those presented by the new alchemies of ‘the Net’. (Tracey, 1997, p. 50)
Utopian and dystopian narratives dominate the discourse on Globalisation and on new Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to such an extent that a great number of authors warn about avoiding such utopian/dystopian themes. For example, Cunningham et al. (1997, p. 4) argue that while there is no shortage of scholarly, journalistic, governmental or institution-specific materials on the intersection of globalisation, information technologies and education, there is, they continue, an “acute shortage of disinterested, thorough and realistic analyses”. To turn this around, scholarship on globalisation and new ICTs is thus passionate, partial and unrealistic (utopian?). Authors such as Kellner (2000a), Snyder (1997), Kenway (1996), Burbules and Callister (2000) and Kapitzke (1999) also warn about not falling into the modes of technophilia/technophobia. Univocally, these authors argue that utopian/dystopian themes should therefore “best be avoided” mostly because they constitute “binarist approaches” and as such tend to “overlook the complexities and the contradictions of sociotechnical activity and educational change” (Kapitzke, 1999, p. 3).

Rather than dismissing utopian thinking, this article chooses to engage with it. There are several reasons for this. To start with, unless there is a dialogue between various utopian, eutopian, dystopian and other futures imaging, dominant social groups and ideologies will continue to define what is seen as utopian (implying impossible and naïve) and what is to be seen as “the truth about the future”. This is problematic because it facilitates the colonisation of the future by particular visions and images. Such colonised futures claim both universality as well as far-sightedness. The problem with this claim is that alleged universality is usually claimed predominantly on the basis of one’s own particular experiences and worldviews. In addition, “a ‘far sighted’ perspective” is developed “solely on the basis of one’s myopia” (Luke and Luke, 2000, p. 278). Thus by focusing on utopian, eutopian and dystopian elements in all futures visions, whether hegemonic or marginal, claims about particular futures “out there” are weakened.

Globotopia

The vision of a globalised world is essentially a vision of a utopian society, or at least a eutopian one. As Peter Martin passionately argues, globalisation is “the best thing that has happened in the lifetime of the post-war generation”, including for those residing in non-western countries (Martin, 2000, pp. 12–13). This is because:

It [globalisation] will lead to an irreversible shift of power away from the developed countries to the rest of the world . . . [It] . . . is simply untrue, both in relative and in absolute terms, . . . that there are many more losers than winners from globalisation, . . . It is sometimes said that free trade must cede precedence to more elevated values. Surely there is no more elevated values than delivering billions of people from poverty, creating opportunities for choice and personal development, and reinforcing democracy all round the world? The liberal market economy is by its very nature global. It is the summit of human endeavor.

( ibid., emphasis added)
Here, Martin not only advocates globalisation but also promotes a particular desired vision for the future, that of a neo-liberal global democracy. This is a vision of global pan-capitalism also known by terms such as “post-scarcity society”, “post-industrial society” or “global age”. While not everyone is as enthusiastic as Martin, most writers on globalisation do mention at least some positive aspects which often include: a shift towards the understanding of human differences within a unified view of humanity; increased ecological consciousness; higher cultural interchange; more consumer and employment choices; and the opening up of possibilities in travel, communication, and business (Kofman and Youngs, 1996; Lechner and Boli, 2000). The vision of globalised societies also promises material benefits, instant satisfaction of material needs, advancement towards international democracy globally, and the movement away from the tyranny of the local community (Nandy, 1987) – an authentic eutopia.

This is also true for education. At its most visionary, the ideal of globalised education is to bring “a dynamic synergy of teachers, computer mediated instructional devices, students collaborating” globally (Mason, 1998). Its purpose is to transform the industrial model of schooling into an agile and flexible system. It is a vision of a particular interpretation of “student-centred” education – students seen as consumers/customers – their needs paramount and their views almost always “right”. In this vision, knowledge is exchanged on the basis of the usefulness it has to the consumer. This development is positive because it is:

… effectively empowering the learner and forcing the providers of education to concern themselves with students’ needs, rather then with the transmission of a pre-established canon of knowledge. (Mason, 1998, p. 7)

Another promise of globalised education lies in the extension of transnational and transcultural dialogues and learning, in deepening what is thought, in the general expansion of knowledge. The re-locations created by globalisation are apparently to influence the creation of a new system of knowledge, education and learning that will include many components that do not currently exist. This new system of knowledge, education and learning could, and according to Cogburn (2002) should, include the following key components: a focus on abstract concepts; a holistic, as opposed to linear, approach; enhancement of the student’s ability to manipulate symbols and to acquire and utilise knowledge; production of an increased quantity of scientifically and technically trained persons; blurring of the distinction between mental and physical labour; encouragement of students to work in teams; and use of virtual teams around the world.

Courses demanded by the global consumer will thus become flexible, adaptable, portable and interactive, and all this could promise great benefits for the student body. Globalisation is, therefore, marked by the disruption of modernist educational practices that in many ways constitute particular spaces of enclosure (Lankshear et al., 1996). Furthermore, it is argued that globalisation can indeed open up spaces for critical-emancipatory education (Edwards and Usher, 2000, p. 154) and the possibility of creatively re-imagining educational practices.
Globalisation thus represents a sign of hope, of the transformative future that can be.

**Cybertopia**

Utopian promise is even more prominent when it comes to the potential of new ICTs. If post-information society utopia could be described in only two words these would be “Libertarian Utopia” (Kinney, in Sardar, 1996, p. 9). Because there is not yet real censorship in cyberspace, totalitarian societies stand less chance of controlling information. New ICTs can thus lead towards global cyber democracy – the Internet decentralises and therefore democratises. As there is also no obvious framework of constraint, the individual is free to become the “author of meaning” (Kenway, 1996, p. 222). The anonymity of the Internet allows for “fluid identity games” (ibid, p. 223), it gives the freedom to create new virtual identities and communities – to invent reality. In addition to its libertarian aspect, the digital age is also “harmonizing” (Negroponte, 1995, p. 229). Digital technology thus has the potential to be “a natural force drawing people into greater world harmony” (ibid, p. 230). It provides a means for addressing hunger and illness among the world’s poor. Furthermore, by improving conditions for the world’s poor, the issue of the gap between rich and poor will become less relevant. New ICTs allow for ever-increasing access to tools of ever-increasing productivity. Latecomers are not disadvantaged; on the contrary, those who adopt technology later will benefit by acquiring advanced technology created by entrepreneurs, avoiding the mistakes of the trailblazers (Gates, 1995).

The choices with new ICTs are virtually limitless, whether in buying products, being entertained, improving health or acquiring education. Information will apparently be easily accessed and will create numerous benefits for the person who seeks it. To summarise, in cybertopia’s most utopian vision, new ICTs will help resolve the environmental crisis, liberate us from the limits of time, geography, class, disability, race and gender, create world harmony and free us from repetitive boring tasks giving more time for leisure.

Similar gains – liberation from the limits of time, geography, class, race and gender – are promised in education, along with improvements in access to and quality of education, individual-centred education, pedagogical abundance, and general improvements in teaching and learning.

Because the Internet removes almost all time and space constraints, its potential is in allowing “individuals to take courses at their own pace, and to choose from all possible courses in the world those which best meet their learning needs” (Skolnik, 2000, p. 57). With constraints of space and time removed the benefits are obvious:

If Little Eva cannot sleep, she can learn algebra instead. At her homelearning station, she will tune in to a series of interesting problems that are presented in an interactive medium, much like video games. First the learning program will identify her level of competence and then move her to the appropriate level of
challenge; algebra, she will discover, is presented as a series of brain-teasers, puzzles that she wants to solve.

Young John may decide that he wants to learn the history of modern Japan, which he can do by dialing up the greatest authorities and teachers on the subject, who will not only use dazzling graphs and illustrations, but will narrate a historical video that excites his curiosity and imagination. When he decides that he wants to learn Japanese, he may enter into a program of virtual reality, learning the language in conversation with Japanese speakers. (Ravitch, 1993, p. 40)

Other benefits that result from removing geographical boundaries include improved access to top quality education:

For every student who gets into a Harvard or a Princeton or a Berkley there are probably a hundred who could handle the work. Why should they be denied the opportunity? (Forbes.com, 2000)

The new technological era in education promotes greater equity of access for those previously excluded. This argument is implicit in the previous quote and more explicit in the following:

Using the new technologies, all children will have access to exactly the same electronic-teaching programs, learning at their own speed and in settings of their own choosing, at home or at school, in a community learning center or at a friend’s home. Regardless of her race or her parent’s income, little Mary will have the same opportunity to learn any subject, and to learn it from the same master teachers as children in the richest neighborhood. (Ravitch, 1993, p. 40)

While educational institutions will initially resist these trends towards democratisation, they will eventually “give in”:

Students will be able to shop around, taking a course from any institution that offers a good one. Degree-granting institutions will have to accommodate this. They will resist at first, but eventually society will realize that anyone is entitled to the best courses, and barriers will fall. Quality education will be available to all. Students will learn what they want to learn rather than what some faculty committee decided was the best political compromise. Education will be measured by what you know rather than by whose name appears on your diploma. (Forbes.com, 2000)

The democratisation of education will occur because new ICTs are making education less costly, more accessible and flexible.

The list of potential benefits and improvements in education does not stop here; it has been suggested that we are at the beginnings of a learning revolution with children themselves becoming agents for change at school (Papert, 1996). Or that the advances in knowledge are such that the information age could more appropriately be termed the Innovation Age (Pitch, 1996), revolutionising everything. Old dreams and utopias can now finally be fulfilled:
The promise of the Information Age is the unleashing of unprecedented productive capacity by the power of the mind. I think, therefore I produce. In so doing, we will have the leisure to experiment with spirituality, and the opportunity of reconciliation with nature, without sacrificing the material well-being of our children. The dream of the Enlightenment, that reason and science would solve the problems of human kind, is within reach. (Castells, 1998, p. 359)

Narratives on globalisation and new ICTs clearly bring in numerous utopian and eutopian visions. What makes them distinct from marginalized utopias is that they also have a dystopian version (Milojevic, 2002). This is not the case with most (marginalized) alternatives, but only with imagined futures that are considered sufficiently a threat to one’s own vision to deserve the critique. Paradoxically, it is by that very critique, by that very act of “negative or reactive project” (Grosz, 1990, p. 59), that “the truth” of what is critiqued gets reaffirmed. That is, what is contested is whether a particular vision is “good” and “desirable” (and asserted that it is not!) and not that this vision is the future.

So why is it these two visions of the future that became hegemonic? What makes them attractive, appealing and “realistic”? How did they succeed in capturing public imagination? And why is it that statements such as “Globalisation and new technologies are dominant forces of the future” (Kellner, 2000b, p. 316) remains accepted both by the mainstream public as well as by the more critical academia as “the truth” about the future?

But, firstly, utopia is not universal. It appears only in societies with the classical and Christian heritage, that is, only in the West. Other societies, have in relative abundance, paradises, primitivist myths of a Golden Age of justice and equality, Cokayne-type fantasies, even messianic beliefs; they do not have utopia. (Kumar, 1987, p. 19, emphasis added)

As argued earlier, several authors, particularly those informed by neo-Marxism and/or critical education theory (e.g., Giroux, 2003; Blackmore, 2000; Kenway et al., 1993; Apple, 2001; McLaren, 1998; Spring, 1998; Mason, 1998) suggest that the push towards current hegemonic visions is dominated by the neo-liberal agenda. This domination has been successful partly because a particular “power block” (Apple, 2001) succeeded in changing the discourse about the future (for example, how globalisation is defined and perceived).

It is important to note here that, as Foucault argued, various social groups can use the same discourses for diverse strategies. For example, the globalisation discourse can be used to justify both “new Right ideologies of market liberalism and social conservativism” (Blackmore, 2000, p. 135), or demands for a more inclusive and multicultural world. This discourse can inform both those who demand the return to “good old fashioned” values in education, or those who demand that the
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curriculum should be radically transformed and more inclusive. So if the globalisation discourse can be used to promote various policies and interventions in the present, why has it recently been mostly linked to demands to commercialise and corporatised education? When calls for educational reform are made by politicians and senior educational administrators, why is globalisation “not normally linked to” multiculturalism (Davies and Guppy, 1997, p. 440) or ecological issues, or issues of global social sustainability? Or indeed, given all the talk about the “global knowledge economy” or global “learning society”, why is globalisation not normally linked to demands for increased funds for education? Why is it that, even within the language of the corporate world, education is “still more often described as a cost [rather] than as an investment” (Levin, 1998, p. 131). Who decides that economic policy imperatives and the ideologies of the market are to take precedence over social, cultural and environmental issues?

One possible explanation is that as globalisation is mostly defined and understood in economic terms, it is the economic dimension that starts to dominate all other areas, such as health, education, etc., as well. Other explanations focus on the critical social and educational thinkers who have, meanwhile, apparently been too busy critiquing and deconstructing and even outrightly refusing to offer futures visions. As explained earlier, this refusal came from the conviction that any futures visioning is in itself seen as prescriptive, and as such is part of a meta-narrative formation (seen to be problematic and dangerous). Interestingly enough, what has resulted from these two simultaneous processes is not a rejection of desired futures and old meta-narratives on progress and development; rather, we have seen the emergence of a new meta-narrative – globalisation – as “the mother of all meta-narratives” (Luke and Luke, 2000, p. 278). It seems that the decision by the left to abandon meta-narratives has turned out to be rather costly.

But there is yet another possible explanation of why globalisation is defined in terms of “free” and “open-market”, and coupled with new ICTs championed “as the solution” for the future, even part of our “salvation”. Current crypto-utopias, that is, hegemonic futures visions of a globalised and technologised world and education have also emerged because they “make the most sense” – are easily recognisable and intelligible – within mainstream views of time, history and the future. The hegemonic future convinces of its inevitability because it “fits” within the already existing “imaginaire”. For example, the “new” “techno-literate” citizen of the 21st century has a long history. This techno-literate subject has been imagined, discussed and portrayed in detail for many decades, if not the whole century. Villemard’s (1910) school of the future, for example, has teachers directly wiring students to a “book feeding machine”. It is precisely such imaging that creates the demands to “put a computer in every classroom” (1980s) and “have every classroom wired” (1990s) (Luke, 2001, p. 426), that is, for future literacies to be defined within technological terms.

Neither has the current “globalisation hypothesis” emerged from an epistemologically and politically neutral place. Rather, it has a history and geography (Edwards and Usher, 2000, p. 15). Geographically, the globalisation hypothesis originated in western societies, historically coinciding with the coming of the
Christian millennium. At that particular moment in history the rhetoric of globalisation served extremely important political purposes. It has helped name more concretely the vaguely described “New World Order”. It has also helped replace more problematic terms such as “monopoly capital” or “world capitalism”, conveniently neutralising anti-capitalist rhetoric. The globalised future has therefore not come to represent the victory of “the right” in the historical ideological battle with the “left”. More conveniently, it has come to represent a whole new system with a whole new set of rules that can potentially benefit all humanity. While, arguably, this may be the case, this globalised future can clearly be identified as a new phase within western and patriarchal understanding of time and social change. As Cvetkovich and Kellner (1997, pp. 13–14) write:

In many mainstream social theories, the discourse of the global is bound up with ideological discourses of modernization and modernity, and from Saint-Simon and Marx through Habermas and Parsons, globalisation and modernization are interpreted in terms of progress, novelty and innovation, and a generally beneficial negation of the old, the traditional, and the obsolete. In this discourse of modernization, the global is presented as a progressive modernizing force; the local stands for backwardness, superstition, underdevelopment, and the oppressiveness of tradition.

Colonisation of the Future

This latest explanation fits well with arguments about western and patriarchal colonisation of the future (Sardar, 1999; Daly, 1978). Confined to the private sphere, women’s contributions to the future were primarily limited to the personal domain (Boulding, 1983; Milojevic, 1998). Although now presenting a large corpus of writing, futures visions coming from women’s and feminist movements continue to remain marginalised. As for the “non-west”, it was assumed, and still is, that non-western societies could not develop images of advanced futures societies because they themselves were “pre-industrial” and “premodern”. The colonisation of knowledge by the dominant (patriarchal, western) perspective has thus led to a view of the future defined mostly by three pillars: (1) the capacity of technology to solve all problems; (2) linear progress as the underlying mythology; and (3) the accumulation and expansion of material goods as the main goal of civilization (Milojevic, 2002). This has resulted in looking at the future as “a single, dominant but myopic projection” (Sardar, 1999, p. 1):

The future is little more than the transformation of society by new Western technologies. We are bombarded by this message constantly from a host of different directions. The advertisements on television and radio, in newspapers and magazines, for new models of computers, cars, mobile phones, digital and satellite consumer goods – all ask us to reflect on how new technologies will transform not just our social and cultural environments but the very idea of what it is to be human.

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Emergent hegemonic futures remain so because they fit into the worldview that legitimates. This worldview also has an inevitability to it, the trajectory of the future is predicated on past and present trends and developments. It also presents what reality is, and is going to be. But the discourse about “globalised and cyber education” is only partly about “the push” toward the future. That is, rather than being only an attempt to “objectively” and “impartially” describe the way things are/going to be, these discourses are also about what is desired, or hoped for, or alternatively, about what is feared. They are also discussions about future directions. Most significantly their description of inevitable futures is itself embedded in politics.

Alternatives

What makes hegemonic futures particularly successful is that they manage to convince not about the dangers (about the dystopian) but about the impossibility and irrelevance of other futures visions. For example, contrast the discourse on the inevitability of globalised and technologised education with the five eutopian discourses that follow.

The first one is the feminist:

In the new emerging knowledge society it is important to acknowledge the insights of feminist pedagogy that insists that all human experiences are gendered. The key is to develop a gender-sensitive education versus a gender-free one (Houston, 1994, p. 122). Educational administrators are thus required to accrue the skills urgently needed in our gender aware schools and universities. Furthermore, it is important for the education system to incorporate themes of nurturing and caring and emphasise “connection over separation, understanding and acceptance over assessment, and collaboration over debate” (Iskin, in Buch and Pollack, 1983, p. 183).

The second is the indigenous:

Indigenous knowledge needs to be “recognized and valued at the level of the school curriculum, and that it be incorporated into the teaching/learning process” (George, 1999, p. 90). Appropriate education within the knowledge society is to ensure that “Aboriginal perspectives are included across the curriculum” and that “community members are playing an important role in the education of not only Aboriginal students, but all students” (Davison, 1999, p. 22). This is because of the importance of Aboriginal knowledge to “the future survival of our world” (Battiste, 2000, p. 194).

The third spiritual:

Education in emerging knowledge society should essentially be “as much about spirituality as it is about mathematics” (Krishnamurti, 1974, p. 177). Every school is thus to be transformed into a gurukula and every teacher into a rishi.
or sage, “who will lead the children along material, moral, ethical and spiritual paths, until they become ideal citizens” (Sai Baba, 1988, pp. 49–50). “Thousands of kindergartens and primary schools must be started with this new system of education, to create a spiritual urge amongst children throughout the entire world” (Sarkar, 1998, p. 182).

The fourth is peace education discourse:

The coming of a new partnership (Eisler, 1997, 2000) and gentle societies (Boulding, 1977, 1990) requires education organised around principles of equality, social justice and inclusion. Extensive (rather than tokenistic and strategic) multiculturalism is thus to be promoted. As future societies become increasingly organised according to the peace paradigm, peace education is to become incorporated in all schools and at all grade levels. Teaching and learning will then accept and honour both human unity, interdependence and interconnectedness as well as our diversity. With the decline in dominator (Eisler, 1987) elements in our global society, in place of various nationalistic holidays and violent histories, most schools will consequently introduce celebrations and curriculum innovations in order to mark peace promoting holidays, such as Harmony Day (21st March) and International Day of Peace (21st September).

And, the fifth, ecological/Gaian:

The paradigm shift currently underway will eventually ensure that nature is no longer seen to be subservient to human needs and economic growth. In this context, teaching and learning will not only be about and through, but also for, the environment (Fien, 1992). This change is reflected in the education that promotes high regard for nature, respect for natural and social limits to growth, empathy with other species, other people and future generations, the all encompassing web-of-life. Most importantly, our planetary education will thus be conducted in the environment in which social and educational “outcomes” are to be valued in terms of social, economic, ecological and spiritual awareness and advancement.

In our current political climate, can these visions and claims legitimately be made? If not, why not? Why are these visions seen as a (faint) possibility, an option, rather than “a force” that is to be governed, or adjusted to? Have globalisation and new ICTs really managed to bring that great a change in education? If not, why is it that they remain the accepted knowledge about the future? If the great transformation has begun, is that despite or because of our efforts to “adjust” to these – at one stage – futures visions?

If the (patriarchal) west can currently be defined as fundamentally about materialism, external change, linear time, evolution, rationalism, a technoscientific approach to knowledge, anthropocentrism, competition, division between mind/body, human/nature and so on, are there spaces for alternatives that challenge some or most of the above? Or are these alternatives also always going to be incorporated into the broader civilizational project? How are the alternatives
that aim to break from the hegemonic present and future marginalised, in theory
and in our day-to-day lives? Most importantly, is there any hope left for them?
And if we are to change the current neo-liberal dominance, which alternative dis-
courses are then most likely to be accepted by educational administrators, teachers
and parents alike?

RESISTANCE AND ALTERNATIVE FUTURES

Thirty years ago Toffler (1974, p. 19) argued that “all education springs from some
image of the future”. This could be paraphrased to assert that all education springs
from some utopian image(s). Utopian elements remain present in discussions on
where education should be going. They are implicit in both actions in the present
(as these are informed by particular desired futures) as well as in the theoretical
debates. As the issue of educational futures is important in areas of policy for-
mation (Peters and Humes, 2003), curriculum (Gough, 2002), educational trends
(e.g., Hostrop, 1973; Withrow, Long and Marx, 1999) and critical futures and
educational studies (e.g., Beare and Slaughter, 1993; Hicks, 2002; Page, 2000;
Hutchinson, 1996) so is the critical evaluation of various utopian futures imaging.
As discussed earlier, these utopian futures images could remain hidden, disguised
or are transparent, overt. Due to a general de-legitimisation of the “utopian” there
is a pressure to stay away from overtly utopian discourses. Nevertheless, utopian
elements remain implicit in all philosophical positions, worldviews and strategic
demands for social change. Even postmodernists, who decline to develop a vision
about the future, have indeed developed (though implicit) vision of what, from
their point of view, constitutes the desired. As argued by Siebers (1994) and Doll
(1995) postmodern vision is mostly characterised by a focus on heterogeneity,
multiplicity, difference and equality (not of sameness, but of differences). Post-
modern utopian vision, further argues Doll (1995, p. 96), takes on a new frame
which can be called “post-liberal” as it refers to its “move beyond individualism”
and focuses on the “ecological, communal, [and] dialogical”. For Siebers (1994,
pp. 2–3) postmodernism too is in essence a utopian philosophy:

What postmodernism wants is what has been lacking, which is to say that post-
modernism is a utopian philosophy. . . . Postmodernists, then, are utopian not
because they do not know what they want. They are utopian because they know
that they want something else. They want to desire differently.

Western education has been built on the successes as well as on the failures of
utopian imagining and intervention. If it is to benefit more than just the (global)
elite, educators will first need to recognize that:

Every imagined future has its past, just as every historical moment has its own
vision of the future. (Thacker, 2001, para. 7)

As well as that:
Those who control the past, control the future; Those who control the future, control the present; Those who control the present, control the past. (George Orwell, 1949)

While the last paragraph might be particularly depressive for educators that dream about an educational eutopia that will exist within and help create inclusive, multicultural, gender balanced, holistic, ecologically and socially sustainable future societies, the situation might not be that bleak after all. While particular discourses about the future in general and the educational future in particular do become hegemonic – constituting “regimes of educational truths” about the future that are considered inevitable and uncontestable – resistance to those is also possible. As suggested by Foucault, the process of normalization is never complete (McPhail, 1997, para. 65). As knowledge is “never fully co-opted” there will “always be subjugated forms of (power/knowledge that can be used to resist prevailing and hegemonic forms of (power/knowledge” (ibid, para. 31).

In this resistance three things are crucial. First is the realisation that what is considered utopian and what are considered real futures probabilities or possibilities are, in fact, political constructions. Second, it is thus important to see that “taken for granted” futures visions are also utopian. Even the “realistic” discourse of the “imminent future” is constituted by desire and imagination, about what is hoped for. And third, it is important to bring in and discuss the alternatives to the hegemonic futures. By exploring alternative visions of what our societies and education can become, we can show that possible alternatives can exist and that “these alternatives can be as ‘real’ as our reality” (Halbert, 1994, p. 29).

It is in this last capacity that utopian images of the future still have the potential to become “an agent of social change” (Boulding, 1995, p. 95), a place to begin “practical journeys of hope” (Hutchinson, 1996, p. 210). It is here that utopia will never cease to inspire.

NOTES

1 Note the difference between the “global” and “globalised” education. Global issues and concerns in the area of education have a long history. These global issues and concerns have predominantly functioned as topics or themes in specific learning areas, such as history and geography, or in more recent curriculum areas such as development, industrialisation, peace studies and environment (Gough, 2000, p. 80). Over the last 25 years, global education predominantly meant dealing with issues such as environment, development and human rights, peace and conflict, race, gender, health and education, and was in some ways connected to issues of social justice. Recently, however, “global education” has come to mean something else. The discourse has been changed, even “hijacked”, and is increasingly used to denote the need for competition and market-based strategies in education. “Globalised education” has thus mostly come to mean vocational education necessary for preparation for a competitive marked force. But “globalised education” has also kept some of the old utopian ideals of a “truly global” education.

2 The forest schools of the past in which sages taught spiritual practices along with other subjects.
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