

# Crisis, Deep Meaning and the Opportunity for Change

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## Abstract

*The world has been in a state of economic uncertainty since the 2008 financial crisis. Despite efforts by governments worldwide to stabilise the system and return to business as usual, the future remains uncertain. Times of crisis are opportunities to introspect and to question deeply the foundations of society, culture and education. In this paper it is argued that we can no longer found futures and develop educational curricula centred upon immediate economic considerations. This paper begins with an ethnographic perspective, then introduces the concepts of Deep Futures and "money and machines" futures. The discussion centres upon their possible relevance to the current world economic situation. It is argued that the foundations of the current dilemma are, in their essence, psycho-spiritual.*

**Keywords:** economic crisis, education, spirituality, meaning, ways of knowing, intelligence

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*I have failed in my foremost task – to open people's eyes to the fact that man has a soul, there is a buried treasure in the field, and that our religion and philosophy are in a lamentable state.*

Carl Jung, towards the end of his life (quoted in Ross, 1993, p.126).

When I was about eight years old, my school principal Mr Suley addressed the morning assembly and spoke from the heart.<sup>1</sup> Now, more than 30 years later, I cannot remember all the details. What I do remember though, was his tone of deep concern. He spoke about war, the environment, cooperation, and simply what it means to be a decent human being. And I will *never* forget what he said at the end of it all.

"You are the future of this world. My generation has already had a go and we messed it up. You must do better, or we will not be here much longer."

Of all the things anybody ever said in my schooling days, this was probably the most impactful. Here he was, an older man approaching retirement, and he decided to speak about something more than keeping the playground clean, punishing misbehaviour, or the principal's old favourite: "Get

ready because the exams are coming up." Mr Suley spoke of life itself, and what it means to be a human being on this planet. They were words of deep meaning, words that moved me. They were moving words because they were not just spoken, but *felt*. I went through another ten years in the public education system after that, and I honestly cannot recall any teacher or administrator speaking with such impact, or about something so meaningful. This silence always puzzled me.

Mr Suley has probably passed on by now. I heard some years ago that he was involved in a car accident, and that his wife had been killed. I was deeply saddened. It would also have been a tragedy if he had passed up the opportunity of speaking meaningfully on the assembly all those years ago. He may not be here anymore, and maybe he suffered greatly through personal tragedy. But the seed he planted on that day lives on in the man writing this article in 2011.

Many of us can probably remember a defining moment from our younger days when a teacher, parent or elder spoke from the heart and moved us, made us think deeply. But what about public educators today? How many have ever engaged in a discussion or a lesson where they shared something from deep within? The answer for many educators is that they rarely touch upon the deeply meaningful. Why is that?

At first glance the answer might seem obvious. There is the issue of personal vulnerability. Maybe the students will ridicule or ignore them. Maybe they will offend someone's religious or philosophical beliefs. And who wants to upset parents in these times of legal accountability? Besides, it is not in the curriculum or syllabus, so why go there?

Yet, rather appropriately, the absence of meaning goes deeper. To understand why education discourses have become an effective litany of surfaces we have to look at the situation in depth. And that takes us into the awkward territory of human spirituality.

To truly appreciate the problem we must examine the way that our society has developed, who controls the dominant discourses, and the ways of knowing which undergird them. And finally we must take into account the very way in which modern science and education views the human mind and its intelligence.

In the analysis which follows I am going to outline some of the salient historical and paradigmatic factors which have created this restriction of cognitive wholeness and the resultant lack of depth in modern public education, and in turn society. This is a time of shifting global power, as indicated by the economic rise of China and Asia, and the relative decline of the United States.

Further, there is economic uncertainty. Europe is besieged by the Euro zone crisis and the bad debts of countries like Greece, Italy and Spain. The United States is also running a massive budget deficit and possibly entering recession. Asia is not immune either. Japan has been in virtual economic stagnation for a decade; and recent disturbing news from China reveals that local and provincial governments are some two trillion American dollars in debt because of reckless spending in the wake of the 2008 global economic downturn. There has been massive expenditure on often unnecessary infrastructure projects to artificially stimulate the economy (Schoen, 2011).

Economic and political instability have created social tensions. In the Arab world we have witnessed several social uprisings. There have been youth riots in London and mass protests in Greece and France. In China, social instability is never far off, with around 90 000 protests per year (Bishop 2010); and there have been online calls for a Chinese Jasmine revolution, making authorities nervous.

Given the kind of social instability we are witnessing, the restoration of cognitive depth in our education systems, along with associated "right-brained" thinking, is something we can no longer ignore. I will argue that the reactivation of such cognitive depth is a necessity not only for economic and social stability, but for the long-term survival of the human race. Now is the perfect time to begin to initiate changes in public education curricula, and expand the ways of knowing that are employed in classrooms. This is a discussion which I situate within the concept of Deep Futures, as I shall explain below.

## Deep Futures

Futures are not simply dry scenarios, nor merely the compact, politically correct visions of policy makers and government think tanks. They are the images which fire our hopes and dreams within the present. Futures, whether preferred, probable, or possible, can call us to action, and can inspire us to reach higher and further. Human beings need something to be passionate about, something that gives us meaning and hope, something that brings us into deep relationship with each other, the world, and Gaia.

To summarise, futures with depth contain these elements:

- **They inspire.** They instill us with passion, and ignite something deep within us.
- **They are the big picture.** They encourage us to see things in broader perspective, including the
  - cultural, national, civilisational, the Gaian, and the spiritual.
- **They honour both the head and the heart.** They permit rational and intuitive ways of knowing
  - and living to co-exist.
- **They permit expression of multiple cultures and worldviews,** not just dominant ones.
- **They are deeply meaningful,** not merely interesting, amusing, or engaging.
- **They permit deep connection** with each other, with nature, and with inner and spiritual worlds.
- **They honour universal human values:** peace, beauty, freedom, justice, and love (including
  - freedom of thought and information, and financial freedom).
- **People and Gaia lie at the heart** of the future, not merely money and machines. (Anthony, 2009).

Critical Futures Studies informs us that all Futures work is embedded within worldviews and paradigms, and this typically includes implicit hegemonies. The other becomes part of the disowned future (Inayatullah, 2008). Like so many civilisations, the Western critical/rational worldview tends to see its version of social expression as

being a result of ineluctable historical forces - the march of progress away from superstition and the primitive and toward the rational and technological. Many non-Western countries have adopted a version of this worldview as their preferred future. Yet futures centred within the critical/rational worldview are but one expression of multiple possible futures. A key role of any critical futurist is to offer provocative alternatives (Slaughter, 2006).

The kind of science, education, and culture that we have developed in modern society make us proficient at analysing, classifying, and experimenting. But we are not so good at putting things back together, at identifying what is important, what is moral, what is great. Deep Futures has a prime aim of bringing together rational and intuitive thinking, to assist us in developing minds and futures that can help us thrive in a dynamic and rapidly changing world (Anthony 2005).

The opposite of Deep Futures are business-as-usual Futures, or what I prefer to call "money and machines Futures". These are Futures which are centred upon the development of science, technology, and markets, while at the same time devaluing the inner, aesthetic and spiritual dimensions of human experience.

### **The Extrication of Meaning**

The effective extrication of deep meaning from modern discourses within science and education can be traced back to the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century. It was at this time that the critical/rational worldview began to establish a hegemonic hold upon the developed nations of the western world (Anthony 2006, 2008). At the dawn of modern science, ideas related to intuitive and spiritual meaning were removed from dominant discourses. The emotional body became an object to be distrusted, and with this rejection knowledge too became disembodied. The focus of science and philosophy became the measurable and empirical. Philosophy became mistrusted, and the spiritual and mystical became increasingly associated with superstition and the ignorance of the dark ages (Tarnas 2000). By 1850 the experimental age in science had dawned, and by the late nineteenth century in psychology introspection became seen as an unreliable way to understand the human mind (Huff, 2003; Pickstone, 2000). Reductionism became dominant in mainstream science, and especially in biology. Human beings came to be seen as biological automata. The search for the soul had not so much formally ended, as absent-mindedly forgotten. As Francis Crick (1994), the man who first assembled a replica of the DNA molecule put it, human beings came to be viewed as "nothing but a bunch of neurons."

Western public education followed in kind, and with the establishment of the modern secular state, removed from curricula ideas related the meaning and purpose. The industrial revolution brought the mass of humanity into the cities, and people became instruments of industry, effectively commoditised for deployment in the consumer society (Anthony, 2005, 2008). This state of affairs has resulted in the present situation where education is heavily focused upon the 3Rs and vocational training (Moffet, 1994).

Another factor is the increasing influence of computer technology. This improves IT literacy, visual/spatial intelligence and abstract reasoning, and increases the amount

of data available to students. However it does not necessarily facilitate introspection or reflection upon the meaning of the data brought forward (Carr, 2010; Oppenheimer, 2004). The computer and various IT devices have become prime media through which reality is perceived, resulting in what I call "computer rationality". This way of knowing exacerbates disembodiment and estrangement from the intuitive. It distances us from the world that we perceive, exacerbating the forced detachment of the scientific worldview.

All this is compounded by an excessive focus upon assessment in education – testing. Yet, as James Moffett (1994) pointed out in his lifelong mission to restore meaning to classrooms, a third and vital component of education has been excluded – personal and spiritual development, including the capacity to employ inner and reflective ways of knowing.

So now educators find themselves teaching in education systems which have a tendency to avoid references to deeply meaningful ideas, intuitive perception and spirituality. Inner worlds have been devalued, or completely leached from the curriculum. Even Waldorf schools, set up by mystic Rudolph Steiner, have greatly restricted references to the spiritual (Oppenheimer, 2004).

As discipline problems in schools increase – partly, I believe, because learning has become increasingly divorced from meaning – many teachers have turned to amusement and entertainment to engage the student. Using songs, Youtube clips, movies and games can greatly enhance student participation and interest. I often use them in my teaching, too. Yet no amount of amusement is going to replace the deeper human need for contemplation and meaning in our lives.

These are crucial questions that I am suggesting need addressing in a healthy education system. What does it mean to be human? What does it mean to be part of this world and even this universe? Why do we live and die, and what should we do in the sometimes painful bit in between? Are we just here for the cash, to go shopping on the weekend or to download the latest app onto our gadget for extended fiddling sessions?

And most of all, how do we establish a healthy relationship with our psyches?

I believe teachers have a duty to teach more than mere syllabus objectives and to keep the kids amused and under control. Whether we like it or not, whenever teachers step into a classroom they teach values, attitudes - and implicitly, meaning. For even the silence on meaningful discussion and the refusal to look within is an implicit meaning in itself. It implies that inner worlds and the spiritual are out of bounds, and therefore illegitimate domains of educational and social discourse.

Admittedly, in order to begin to address the deeper questions I refer to, we need either explicit or implicit institutional and societal approval to do so. This is where it must be appreciated that schools and universities play a normative function in society, and have been created, at least in part, as instruments of social control. Franklin (1999), after an examination of the journal *The Review of Educational Research*, found that the idea of social control has been central in the development of educational curricula. At around the time of World War One in the United States, educational administrators attempted to create a *scientific* method of curriculum development, in the name of social efficiency. Those curriculum designers attempted to use the curriculum as a medium to manage society. Franklin argues that public schools and their

curricula have been used to establish control amidst the social problems of industrialisation, urbanisation, and immigration. In Franklin's understanding, this agenda was transposed via the scientific language of psychology and learning (Franklin, 1999).

The industrialisation of society has brought with it a 'corporate domination' associated with the powerful controlling influence of mainstream establishment culture (Franklin, 1999; Hart, 2000; Loye, 2004; Milojevic, 2005). David Loye(2004, p.26) equates this "Establishment" with the paradigm of the "Pseudo-Darwinian Mind". The control of society and science has been assisted by a largely passive and compliant academia, and the influence of television, publishing industries, and the mass media by "an economic and power elite". A Darwinian "survival of the fittest" ethos and selfishness are the ruling motifs which legitimise and fund dominant science (Loye, 2004, p.26).

This social evolution, and the resultant control structures, has placed minimal value upon the spiritual growth of the individual, nor upon personal empowerment, the latter of which is a threat to the power of institutions and the state (Moffett, 1994). It may be assumed that as a result, individual access to spiritual knowledge and the development of wisdom has suffered. This is because such cognitive experiences require inner and often "non-ordinary" states of consciousness (Braud, 2003; Grof, 2000; Loyd Mayer, 2007), and these have been almost totally absent from the educational processes of state control and the critical/rational ways of knowing which have dominated Western society for several centuries (Table 1, below).

The teacher is a subject within these power structures. This context has to be acknowledged by any teacher wishing to initiate a deeper and more meaningful discourse within the classroom.

### **Other Ways of Knowing**

The mediation of ways of knowing with societal and educational contexts has much bearing on this problem. In order to explore the issue of deep meaning, and to facilitate the cognitive processes involved, we need to expand our ways of knowing. The development of Western society since the ancient Greeks has featured a power play between three primary worldviews (Anthony, 2006). I call these the critical/rational (scientific), the religious/spiritual (religious) and the mystical/spiritual (mystical) worldviews respectively. Over time, and in different locations and cultures, each of these worldviews has held more power and sway than at other times. Presently Western society and education have become dominated by the critical/rational worldview. Each worldview has preference for specific ways of knowing, with a valorisation of particular cognitive processes and certain approaches to knowledge acquisition.

### **The Rejection of the Affective**

A crucial part of this historical process has been the rejection of *affective* ways of knowing (feelings), and with them familiarity with the subtle feelings of the intuitive mind. While these play a crucial role in mystical spiritual and religious/spiritual

worldviews, feelings were deliberately expunged from the process of scientific enquiry.

The problem is that the realm of *feeling* is crucial to understanding the deeper resonance of life, and much of what it means to be human. A great chasm has opened between the intuitive experience of being human, and the shallowness of rationality-dominated science and education, which denies the essence of life and humanity. In short, the critical/rational worldview denies the spiritual fabric of life, and this is an artificial imposition which has alienated much of the common public. The scientific community and educators have something in common: they are increasingly concerned that their fields are losing touch with the common person.

Presently in academia, there is a pronounced emphasis upon the quantitative, with philosophical and spiritual ways of knowing greatly downplayed. Qualitative researchers are finding it difficult to gain employment. When universities search for new staff, they typically seek individuals who can gain funding for research. And funding tends to go to researchers and proposals which are empirical and quantitative in nature. This is a continuation of the general domination of the critical/rational worldview since the seventeenth century. But looking at it in a more short-term perspective, it is also a reflection of the materialism engendered by booming economies. At such times money and industry tend to gain more power and control. Technoscience (science directed by the pull of the market) dominates over pure science and philosophical enquiry. Now, with the recent economic turmoil, this trend may begin to shift. Societies, universities, educators and governments will begin to ask deeper questions, and with them philosophical approaches to learning will begin to resurface. They might even start talking about spirituality.

### **The Definition of Intelligence, and its Context as Social Control**

The conceptualisation of human intelligence plays a strong role in the dominance of critical/spiritual ways of knowing in modern education and society. When we try to make meaning of the world, we are implicitly employing human intelligence, and the way we employ human intelligence is culturally mediated (Richardson, 2000). The way we think of intelligence cannot be fully appreciated without appreciating its social and historical context.

Francis Galton's work in the mid-to-late nineteenth century was important in the development of intelligence tests. Galton's statistical approach was to gather data about people's weight, height, hand strength, power of breath, head size, and psychophysical characteristics such as reaction times and ability to distinguish fine sensory discriminations (Gardner, Kornhaber, & Wake, 1996). These tests focused on sensory perception, which reflected the philosophy of the British empiricists such as Locke and Hume. The latter believed that all data entered the mind through the senses (Gardner et al. 1996). The assumption was that those with a greater capacity for sensory perception had a greater amount of data to work with, and greater ability to make discriminations (Gardner et al. 1996, p.47). This foreshadowed the mind-as-computer metaphor which currently dominates cognitive psychology (Maddox, 1999).

Galton's use of statistical methods helped establish the normative approach to understanding mind and behavior which dominates modern psychology. This includes the development of factor analysis, which is widely used in determining IQ (Gardner et al. 1996, p.51). Recent IQ theorists such as Arthur Jensen (1998) and Herrnstein and Murray (1994) follow comparable normative approaches. The key here is that cognitive abilities that are not easily measured tend to be left off the map. These have inevitably diminished the subtle, the intuitive and the spiritual, all important inner ways of knowing that are required for contemplating meaning and appreciating the subtle nuances which underpin wisdom and self-awareness.

At approximately the same time as Galton, an alternative approach to testing intelligence was developed by Alfred Binet in France (Gardner et al. 1996, p.47). Binet was assigned the task of developing a way to identify those students who were at risk of failing the education system during a period of mass urbanisation.

Binet was more interested in comprehension, judgment, and the capacity for reason and inventiveness. His tests became widely adopted, and focused upon simple everyday things, such as comparing two objects from memory, counting from twenty to zero, and comprehending abstract words and disarranged sentences (Gardner et al. 1996, p.49). Binet's tasks therefore focused upon verbal and linguistic, arithmetic, mnemonic and artistic abilities.

We may note that both Binet's and Galton's approaches made no attempt to examine any deeper reflective processes that might require introspection or even mildly non-ordinary states of consciousness. Binet's focus in particular helped entrench the dominance of externalised and phenomenological approaches to human intelligence, by avoiding inner worlds and self-reflective ways of knowing.

The tendency of some of those who later employed Binet's methods was to interpret intelligence as a single universal measure. Gradually, the idea of the IQ score as something discrete and measurable became reinforced - a "distinct, quantifiable thing" within an individual's head (Gardner et al. 1996, p.50).

These developments in thinking about intelligence occurred in the context of the late nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. The measurability fixation of experimentalism and mechanistic science was dominant (Ross, 1993). Teachers eventually believed that intelligence was a rational/linguistic and mathematical/logical process. The inner and reflective processes of mind were forgotten. The way that we think of students as being "smart" inevitably affects both assessment procedures, and the way that we teach.

## How I Sought Meaningful Education

Yet even the acknowledgement and awareness of this context is not enough if educators are to begin to expand cognitive depth in education. In order for a teacher to begin to open spaces for deeper meaning in classrooms, and to open inner worlds, she must have explored those realms herself. She must have attempted to address her psycho-spiritual issues. These are not things that can be simply written into the curriculum. They have to be deeply explored, deeply *felt* and deeply *meant* by the educator. In my life, I have made it a point to do just that. A relevant anecdote will help clarify my point.

In 2001 I was teaching English in Taiwan. One morning I woke up alone in my apartment, and knew something was very wrong. I looked around. The room seemed strangely desolate and empty. I had everything I needed at that time: a nice place to live, an attractive Taiwanese girlfriend, and debt-free financial stability, if not quite security. Yet I felt empty, depressed. Fortunately, I had spent some years working deeply with the inner worlds of my psyche, including practicing mediation and doing emotional work on myself. So I knew that there was a message for me in the feeling.

The following morning I awoke and the feeling was there again. But this time there was a song playing in my head. It was a song by the Beatles: *Nowhere man*.

*Doesn't have a point of view,  
Knows not where he's going to,  
Isn't he a bit like you and me?*

To paraphrase Lennon and McCartney, I had become "a real nowhere man", sitting in my nowhere land, making nowhere plans for nobody. In the random universe of the Western critical/rational worldview, synchronicities like this are dismissed as mere coincidences. But I saw this as something deeply meaningful. I reflected upon things for a week or so, and decided to take some action. Life had become easy, but meaningless. I realised I had become stuck within my own comfort zone.

Five years before that week in 2000 I had deferred my enrolment in a doctoral programme. Now, after some reflection, I decided to resume. But what would I study? I could have gone with the demands of the economy, and enrolled in the most prestigious school that would take me, and study whatever the education market was demanding. Instead I made a decision to go for what really *moved* me. I decided I wanted to study the frontiers of human intelligence, including the interface of rational and intuitive ways of knowing. In short, I chose to focus upon a *spiritual* domain of education.

Shortly afterwards I found out about that futurist Sohail Inayatullah was a visiting professor at Tamkang University in Taipei. Inayatullah also worked through the University of the Sunshine Coast in Australia. I arranged a meeting with Inayatullah, and was instantly drawn to the kinds of ideas he espoused. I soon applied to enter the Policy Studies doctoral programme in Australia, under Inayatullah's supervision. Although I encountered resistance from some administrators who did not care much for my esoteric interests, I was permitted to enroll.

As I embarked upon my doctoral studies I discovered something wonderful. Because I was studying knowledge which I had deep passion for, the entire process became almost effortless. That began a period of prolific output. I completed the thesis, a 110 000 word dissertation, wrote a book based on it, wrote more than a dozen peer-reviewed articles, three book chapters, delivered three conference papers and wrote several critical academic reviews all in less than six years - and all while working fulltime in education.

I deliberately activated my intuition and employed other ways of knowing during the research process. Before any research session or reading, I sat quietly and went through the questions I wished to answer. I then trusted what I call "the feeling sense" to help guide me to the correct books, papers, chapters, paragraphs and sentences which I needed to answer my questions. If I started reading something which just did-

n't feel right, I ditched it, and read something that did move me. I kept a journal in which I wrote down intuitive insights as they came to me. In the initial stages I wrote and wrote and wrote, allowing the subconscious mind to formulate and synthesise information, sometimes independently of any conscious understanding of how it was all happening.

I discovered at a personal level that life becomes much less effortful when you listen to the heart, when you tap into intuitive intelligence. It takes a lot of the guesswork out of things. It connects the individual with something greater than the individual self. The entire experience is quintessentially spiritual.

This process which I used to initiate and conduct my academic research I have come to call Integrated Inquiry (Anthony 2011).<sup>2</sup>

### **The Problem and a Way Forward**

The empirical and quantitative are wonderful assets to human knowledge. The emphasis upon these in recent centuries has led to tremendous advances in knowledge. This has accelerated since the beginning the twentieth century with the dominance of technoscience, which has facilitated the integration of science with consumer/technological society. Yet this has come at a price. Human beings are losing touch with inner worlds and the subtle awareness of the essential spiritual dimensions of life.

My belief is that students are crying out for something, anything, which will help them address the deep questions within. American educator John Moffet (1994) argued this for the best part of half a century. In more recent times Australian academic David Tacey (2007) has discovered exactly this. He has enjoyed great success in introducing a spirituality course into literature programmes at la Trobe University in Melbourne. The enthusiastic responses of his students has led him to conclude that students are hungry for the spiritual, but they are hampered in their expression due to the delimited nature of curricula.

Nonetheless many teachers and administrators often seem unable, or unwilling, to address the issue of deep meaning. Devoid of meaning, schooling can become a drudgery of cynicism and confusion. I believe a genuine education has to honour the full range of human cognitive potentials. This includes the utilisation of a more complete range of ways of knowing.

### **The Decline of the West? What It can do about It**

There is yet another factor to consider here. Things are shifting, and fast. There is a real danger that the Western world, including the United States, is in decline. In relative economic terms, this is indisputable. After World War Two, the US economy represented about 50 per cent of the total world economy. Now it is approximately 25 per cent. The Chinese economy has been growing at around ten per cent for some thirty years, and will likely become the biggest world economy well before the middle of this century. China, Russia, Brazil and India together now hold over forty percent of international reserve assets, excluding gold (Tyson, 2009).

Friedman (2007) points out that the new world is one where Western economies must compete with new, emerging and developing societies. Rekindling lost parts of the Western psyche that were eliminated in the industrial revolution – "the disowned Future" (Inayatullah 2008) - may help. As an educator who has worked in Taiwan, mainland China and Hong Kong, and has taught in Australia, New Zealand, and visited American schools, I can report that there are strengths and weaknesses to each civilisation's approach to knowledge. Most East Asian systems have also ditched deep meaning, but to speak generally, they have not embraced individual freedom of thought, intellectual autonomy, creativity, nor allowed the inner worlds of the psyche to flourish. The advantage they have is that they value education in a way that the West has forgotten. This is a dangerous situation for the Western world. Its education systems are sowing the seeds of a rapid civilisational decline. The kinds of attitudes that are dominating are those that will breed mediocrity and failure.

Western education needs to get smart; intelligent in a fuller sense of the word. The West should not try to beat Asia at its own game, and attempt to mass produce graduates via Amy Chua's (2011) "Tiger Mother" approach (submission, obedience and rote learning). That is a battle the West has already lost. It is outnumbered and "outsmarted". However, the good news is that if it expands the notion of intelligence, the picture improves.

It is not necessary for Western nations to turn their societies into effective beehives of production and "busy-ness." This is not the West's traditional strength. Instead they have to capitalise upon the strong points of Western civilisation and education. It is somewhat ironic that at the time when some are arguing that the Western world is in decline, there is now, more than ever, a need for some of the things the West has long excelled at.

Some countries in the East may be making exactly the same mistakes that the West has made. The rapid urbanisation, industrialisation and expanded consumerism of East Asia have left the planet reeling from severe environmental pressures that may take centuries to relieve.

China is a prime example. Hu Jintao's (2011) 12th Five Year Plan is attempting to keep China's phenomenal economic growth sustained via a huge increase in domestic consumption. China is heading in the same general direction as the West, trying to drag masses of humanity towards a materialistic, energy-hungry lifestyle which the world simply cannot support. It is a systems problem. Whether it is the US, China, India or Australia, the values of this system are bankrupt. This is an appropriate time to challenge such notions; if it is not already too late.

## **What the West has to Offer**

Despite the problems that the West is experiencing at present, Western civilisation does have something to offer the world. Democracy might be one of them. Turning again to the case of China, as Will Hutton states in *China and the West: The Writing on the Wall*, the Western ideals of freedom of expression, justice, and democracy could potentially benefit China, especially as China moves away from being a manufacturing economy to become a service or knowledge economy. Even Singaporean

academic Kishore Mahbubani (2002), a sometimes harsh critic of the West, believes that democracy and features of Western political systems are necessary for developing nations and economies.

Part of this equation is the open thinking that western culture typically features. Daniel Pink (2005) has stated the case well in his book *"A Whole New Mind."* Pink has pointed out that "left-brained" cognitive processes have generally dominated over "right-brained" ways of knowing in modern Western culture. ii However, Pink argues that the world is changing. What he calls "L-directed Thinking" (left-brained) and the jobs requiring such cognitive skills are increasingly being taken up by emerging economies like India and China. Fortunately the West also has a strong tradition of "R-directed thinking". These right-brained processes involves six "high-concept, high touch" senses, namely: design, story (ability to synthesise information into a narrative), symphony (finding integration, the big picture), empathy, play, and meaning (Pink, 2005, p.65). Deep Futures as I envisage them are permissive of such ways of knowing, alongside traditional "rational" cognition.

What will be increasingly required in the future, argues Pink, are skills which more fully balance both sides of the brain: concepts like artistry, empathy, taking the long view, and pursuing the transcendent (Pink, 2005, p.27). In short, Pink argues that there has been a shift from the information age to the "conceptual age". The driving forces are affluence, technology and globalisation. Those in most demand and most able to prosper in this age will be creators, empathisers, pattern recognisers and meaning makers (Pink, 2005, p.50).

Crucially, modern prosperity has freed millions from a survival mentality and mundane pursuits, enabling them to seek transcendence, even self-realisation. This is the return to greater meaning and purpose of Deep Futures. In the United States the number of meditators has doubled in the last decade, with about ten million adults now practicing it. Fifteen million were practicing yoga in 2005, a doubling from 1999 (Pink, 2005, p.60). This has lead Pink to suggest that "meaning is the new money" (Pink, 2005, p.61). Others agree that critical rationality is no longer enough in the short or long term (Laszlo, Grof, & Russell, 2003; Zohar & Marshal, 2005).

What we are talking about here is a spiritual shift; an incorporation of those necessary and intrinsic aspects of human cognition and experience which have been leached from our lives and education systems in recent centuries.

There is now a growing body of theorists calling for a greater degree of spirituality in business, and in the workplace. One of the first was Peter Senge (1994), who sees personal mastery and the integration of the intuitive, transcendent and rational faculties as being intricately interrelated in the modern workplace. These cognitive processes enhance perception of the connectedness of the world, compassion, and commitment to the whole (Senge, 1994, p.167). Senge calls for a movement away from selfishness and towards a commitment to something greater than ourselves, including a greater desire to be of service to the world. This incorporates the experience of the awakening of "a spiritual power" (Senge. p.167-172). Senge argues that this shift is an important part of the learning organisation.

There are parallels here with futurist Sohail Inayatullah's (2004) call for spirituality to be "the fourth bottom line" of business. Inayatullah believes there is already a

strong shift towards a more responsible society and corporate world. This involves moving from the controlling, ego-driven organisations to the learning organisation and then to a "learning and healing organisation". This process shifts an organisation from mechanistic to organic and spiritual (Inayatullah, 2004). There are three requirements: a "relationship with the transcendent"; meditation and/or prayer; and honouring the social (ibid.).

Likewise, Pink (2005), citing a report from the University of Southern California's Marshall School of Business called *A Spiritual Audit of Corporate America*, argues that employees are hungering for spiritual values in the workplace. Pink argues that as more companies come to appreciate this desire, there will be "a rise in spirit in business" (Pink, 2005, p.215).

Elsewhere (Anthony, 2008) I have argued for the necessity for an expanded definition and appreciation of human intelligence, to incorporate the most essential aspects of human spiritual traditions - "integrated intelligence". There is a growing body of evidence that human consciousness is not confined to the head of the individual, and that human beings are connected via a collective consciousness (Braud, 2003; Grof, 2000; Laszlo et al., 2003). Integrated intelligence is a human being's awareness of this, and the ability to use that intelligence to create a more meaningful life. It is about being successful in a way that transcends mere consumerism and materialism. Integrated Intelligence stands as a possible mediation factor here. If, as Inayatullah implies, spirituality does become the fourth bottom line of modern economics, integrated intelligence could play a crucial role.

The focus for Pink and Senge (and to a lesser degree, Inayatullah) is often centred on the benefits of "R-Directed Thinking" for workers in Western knowledge economies. Yet, I would like to assert the greatest benefit of integrated intelligence. Let me here quote Peter Russell:

We are all part of the same groundswell. The most important question we need to ask is, how can I put my own life in greater alignment with that groundswell? (Laszlo et al., 2003, p.ix)

There is a tendency for lay people and politicians both East and West to see "the other" as a threat. It is time to begin to work with the inner dimensions of mind, both in our own lives, and within education systems. We owe it to our children. David Loye (2004) has pointed out that we can no longer afford to think in terms of a survival of the fittest, hyper-materialistic world. Integrated intelligence is ultimately an affirmation of the extant reality that we are all part of a united humanity. At the very least, humanity is *potentially* united. It is time for a re-alignment of thinking, both East and West, and a genuine deepening of our ways of knowing.

One of the greatest problems which developed from the Enlightenment and the scientific revolution was the philosophical withdrawal of humankind from nature and the cosmos (Tarnas, 2000; Wilber, 2000). With scientific detachment and reductionism came a loss of connection, and a loss of meaning and purpose. Now we find ourselves in a time where more and more human beings are seeking a greater sense of meaning and purpose. Skeptics like Richard Dawkins (2006) serve the purpose of highlighting the sometimes madness that passes as "spirituality" and religion on this planet. But

they have gone too far. Not only is an intuitive understanding of meaning and human spirituality economically and socially useful, it is imperative. The reality is that despite the hard work of skeptics, human beings are turning towards transcendence and religious and spiritual matters in ever greater numbers. It is not our responsibility to eliminate that spirituality, as was tried in China under Mao Ze Dong, creating the single most destructive reign of any leadership in human history (Fairbank, 2006). It is now time to guide the young towards a healthy expression of the spiritual, and a healthy relationship with their inner worlds.

The advantages may be great, as I have written previously (Anthony, 2005). These may include enhanced capacity to find meaning and purpose in life, as well as counteract information overload and complexity; a move beyond possessive individualism and greed; and a circumvention of the information power and control of institutions and the state. I maintain that personal and collective human transformation is one of the most likely long-term benefits. Integrated intelligence may play a valuable role in the development of society.

### **Practically Speaking**

I am not advocating bringing a personal agenda for inculcating a particular religious or philosophical perspective through the classroom door. The process needs to be more considered, more subtle and more respectful than that.

The key is bringing in inner worlds and other ways of knowing into curriculum, and into the classroom. Introducing other ways of knowing into the classroom requires no religious or spiritual jargon. Nor does it necessarily require that students share everything that they experience while exploring the intuitive or being reflective.

I use visualisation and quiet time for my students. Journal writing can also be a great way to get students to honour the intuitive, without necessarily having the need to bear their soul with the class. Using journals immediately after quiet time is a great way to develop the link between the left and right brains, the conscious and subconscious minds.

Sharing meaningful anecdotes from personal life is another way of touching a more profound psycho-spiritual level within the students. Ideally, the themes should be something related to the kinds of profound philosophical and spiritual issues I have mentioned in this paper. Whenever the teacher touches upon the profound or something that connects us with the greater thread of human history, life itself or our dreams and aspirations, opportunities to be meaningful open up. Such themes can include the environment, nature, justice, space exploration, the death penalty, free-market economics, personal success, failure, suicide, illness, triumph, defeat, disability, serious challenges, personal danger and so on.

There are other ways to introduce spiritual concepts and experiences into classrooms without getting caught in the crossfire of religious and spiritually-specific terminology. Recent studies into the practice of mindfulness have shown promising results (Reid, 2011; Sawyer, 2009). Further, introducing the spiritually playful concept of synchronicity may also be an opening to a general spiritual awareness (Cho, Miller, Hrastar, Sutton, & Younes, 2009).

The world is not likely to be transformed into the serenity of a giant Buddhist monastery anytime too soon, and neither is the average teacher's classroom. I am suggesting small, balanced introductions to inner worlds. This can even be done with senior students. I recently asked a new Form 7 class (18-19 year olds) in Hong Kong if they had ever tried visualisation before. None of them had. Not ever in some 13 years of education! But I didn't let that stop me! We did a visualisation on something deeply meaningful to Hong Kong students – the public exam!

Finally, educators can't fake wisdom or deep understanding of life. They have to discern amongst concepts they feel they have mastery or understanding of, and those they do not. Intuition must be employed in the classroom - to know what, when and how "deep" to teach. And that is something subtle. It is a different way of knowing how to teach.

### **The Shifting Sands of the Twenty-first Century**

The shape of the world is shifting. The dominance of Anglo/white culture is over. The global economic crisis is not merely about greed or poorly regulated banking systems. It is a crisis of meaning. What does it mean to be human in the modern age?

Contemplation and meaning cannot simply be afterthoughts in the curriculum. They are an essential part of life. Schooling is meant to equip us to live life in a way that is meaningful. We must bring time into the classroom to reflect upon what it is all about. This entails a degree of vulnerability on behalf of the teacher. Is the teacher to admit her own fears and weaknesses, or her pain at loss and suffering? Is she to confess to the things in this world that she does not understand? Her limitations? And what of those profound life experiences which have granted her wisdom and understanding? Is she to remain silent regarding this? Talking about such things requires courage. This is a state of emotional vulnerability which can only be negotiated by an individual with a high degree of psychological and spiritual maturity. In short, wisdom. And wisdom emerges from a deep introspection upon life experience. It emerges from inner worlds. We need to start planning for futures with depth.

Carl Jung died in 1958, lamenting his failure to help people see that the human race has a spiritual essence, and that "religion and philosophy" had become impoverished. More than fifty years later, are we any closer to uncovering that "buried treasure" in the field? If not, how can our societies and education systems be part of the discovery process, rather than part of the perpetuation of the problem?

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## Notes

1. I have used an autoethnographic approach throughout much of this paper. The reason for this is to suggest how my personal thoughts, feelings, stories, and observations inform my understanding of the social context of modern education and life, thus making the personal subjectivity transparent. Autoethnography is often employed as a means to make clear the author's process of attempting to find meaning of events, and this is an inherently subjective process (Bochner & Ellis, 2006). The "meaning" of the current crises in modern education and global development have no simple empirical causes or solutions. Thus autoethnography is perfectly compatible with the postmodern influence on Critical Futures Studies, and the deeply reflective, affective and spiritual aspects of Postconventional Futures Studies and Deep Futures (as explained in this paper).
2. You can read more about Integrated Inquiry, including excerpts from the study diary I used while writing my doctorate in Anthony (2011), which is available online. At <http://www.bentham.org/open/toiscij/openaccess2.htm>
3. It is now well recognised that cognitive processing is not so exclusively demarcated into right and left hemispheres (Jensen 2008). However there are processes which rely more heavily on one hemisphere, and so this simple model stands as a useful approximation

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