5TH ANNUAL
SOKA EDUCATION CONFERENCE
-2009-

EDUCATION & DEMOCRACY
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The Soka Education Student Research Project is an autonomous organization at Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo, California.

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SOKA EDUCATION CONFERENCE 2009:
SOKA EDUCATION AND DEMOCRACY

SOKA UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA
ALISO VIEJO, CALIFORNIA
FEBRUARY 7TH & 8TH, 2009
PAULING 216
# Soka Education Conference 2009 Program
## Pauling 216

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<td>James Spady, Di’Anna Xochitl Duran, Tana Gandhi, Sari Nakayama, Guest Aaditto Shen</td>
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Dear Guests, Faculty, Staff, and Students of Soka University of America (SUA),

Our fifth annual Soka Education Conference takes place on February 7th and 8th, 2009. This year’s theme, “Soka Education and Democracy,” takes a candid stance on one of the most pressing issues of today, presenting an interdisciplinary examination of democracy and its role in humanistic education. Not limited to Soka Education, paper presentations and workshops held by students, faculty, and alumni will address a wide range of topics.

In this volume are the works of students, faculty, and alumni, each with their own interpretation of the relationship between education and democracy. Mr. Cliff Tanaka and Mr. Fumihiko Tominaga choose to focus on the concept of free speech, while Mr. Scott Williams discusses the role of ethics in our globalizing society. Mr. Masashiro Kaleo Louis reinforces SUA’s newest environmental studies concentration and Professor Orin Kirshner will conduct a workshop discussion on the Core curriculum also offered at SUA. From Mr. Jean Marcus Silva, we are given an interesting view of the education system through his comparison of votes and grades, and from Mr. Masataka Ito, we hear of the role that media plays in shaping the creation of value. Workshops are also presented by Mr. Menelik Tafari to illustrate the concept of the experiential learning cycle, and by Professor Kristi Wilson to delve into Daisaku Ikeda’s vision of democracy in education. Mr. Michael Strand will examine democracy as based on the theories of Kant and embodied by famous thinkers and politicians in comparison to Makiguchi’s pedagogy, and Mr. David Witkowski refers to our present political situation and the ideas of Karl Marx to put forth the idea of a fetishism of democracy. Finally, we will have a panel presentation from Professor James Spady, Ms. Di’Anna Xochitl Duran, Ms. Tana Gandhi, and Ms. Sari Nakayama that welcomes guest Aaditto Shen from India via teleconference to discuss democracy in the classroom and progressive education.

Our heartfelt desire is that this conference will portray the importance of the values of Soka Education in our present society, and how education must always be progressing to keep up with the needs of the times. This year, we are honored to welcome keynote speaker Monte Joffee from New York. Joffee is founder of the Education for Global Citizenship Institute and co-founder of the Renaissance School. He has also researched and written extensively on Makiguchi. We look forward to hearing about his experiences in the classroom in cultivating the ideals of Soka Education and also of democracy.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge all of the presenters and facilitators, our keynote speaker Monte Joffee, Danny Habuki, the Pacific Basin Research Center (PBRC), the IT members, and student volunteers, amongst others, for their behind the scenes work and continuous efforts in making this conference possible. Their support and commitment are truly appreciated. We would also like to express our utmost gratitude to Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and his successors, Josei Toda and the founder of SUA, Dr. Daisaku Ikeda, who have lived their lives dedicated to actualizing Soka education.

Sincerely,

Soka Education Student Research Project
Soka Education Conference Committee
Di’Anna Xochitl Duran is a graduate of Soka University of America, class of 2008. She currently lives in Arizona and is developing her understanding of the classroom while working at the International School of Tucson. She intends to continue her work in schools while living in Europe starting in June this year. She hopes to ultimately work in educational policy.

Tana Gandhi: “Namaste. Hola. Kem Cho? :-) My name is Tana Gandhi and I’m graduating with the class of 2009. I major in Humanities and am deeply appreciative of the education I’ve received here at Soka. I’m from Artesia, California and am excited to return home to spend some time with my family again. I plan to apply into graduate school for education and/or cultural studies. I studied abroad in Barcelona, Spain and consider it an amazing opportunity to create an independent sense of self. Since then, I vow to make every experience as exhilarating and meaningful. My interests lay in education as well as postcolonial studies. My capstone research, as a result, connects the two by studying American Indian boarding schools in the early twentieth century. My paper for the Soka Education Conference demonstrates the importance of alternative education through the practices of “autonomous, self-regulated, and self-discovered learning.”

Masataka Ito is currently a student of Carnegie Mellon University, the Master of Entertainment Industry Program. He was born in Tokyo, attended Tokyo Soka Elementary School, and then schools in London, Houston, and Soka University of America where he graduated Magna Cum Laude. He was also one of the founding members and later, the vice president of Vita Leonis Philharmonic Orchestra. He is currently residing at North Hollywood attending Carnegie Mellon LA campus, expecting to graduate this May. During the summer of 2008, he was a production assistant for the FX TV Series, Damages, starring Glenn Close. Currently, Masataka is interning at Dentsu America, a subsidiary of Dentsu, the leading advertising brand in the world, under the supervision of the Emmy winning Creative Director. His goal is to become a film/TV producer with global network who can create contents that can inspire the audiences from the rest of the world.

Dr. Monte Joffee has been involved the New York City small school and charter school movements for over twenty years. He is the co-founder of The Renaissance Charter School in New York (www.renaissancecharter.org) and served as its principal for 14 years. His doctoral dissertation at Teachers College was a longitudinal case study on the development of collaborative leadership in a small school. He served as the Director of the SGI-USA Educators Division for over ten years. Dr. Joffee has conducted research on the life and educational theories of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi. He is currently working on several projects to integrate Education for Global Citizenship in public schools. One is the formation of the New York French American Charter School in Harlem, a French-English bilingual school. Dr. Joffee and his wife live in Bronx, NY and have three grown children, all of whom are educators.
**Orin Kirshner** began teaching at SUA in 2006 as a professor of American government and politics. He received his B.A. at Evergreen State College, and his Master’s and Doctorate at The New School for Social Research. He is especially interested in American democracy, American politics in the global perspective, and American trade politics and has taught at the University of Minnesota and the John Hopkins Institute in Nanjing.

**Masashiro Louis**, affectionately known as Kaleo at SUA, grew up in a small coffee village in Kona, Hawai‘i. He attended Kamehameha Schools in Honolulu, Oahu and originally planned to be a medicinal lab researcher. Attracted to the wonderful ideals and network of Soka University of America, he instead decided to receive a Bachelor of Arts. Masa studied a wide array of subjects but focused on history and philosophy courses. He plans on being a lawyer and eventually significantly contributing to social justice through a number of different fields. More than anything, Masa is appreciative of and loves the family he has created at SUA. He hopes to perpetuate and actualize the principles of SUA through achieving the dreams of his own life. He enjoys the beach, singing and good company.

**Sari Nakayama** is a senior student at Soka University of America (SUA), concentrating in Social Behavioral Sciences. Her great passion for learning about educational issues developed during her study-abroad experiences in Mexico, where she witnessed suffering caused by institutionalized social, economic, and political injustice on a daily basis. As she began to wonder how she could contribute to alleviate the situations of poverty, she encountered an orphanage for street children, which was founded on the philosophy of Paulo Freire. She was inspired by the people endorsing the value of education and the children upholding hope under such difficult circumstances. Through the experience, she developed conviction that education is a way of liberating the oppressed and achieving humanity in contemporary society. After graduating from SUA, Sari would like to go to a graduate school to study further about education and to find out her way of actualizing humanistic educational reform in the future.

**Jean Marcus Silva** is currently in love with movies. He just finished his first production, from his screenplay of a short film entitled "Just a Perfect Day." More is to be found from his head in more time. But his interest in education came from his father's passion for Paulo Freire and his own sense of profound anarchist rebellion.
James Spady: “Born in New York City, I grew up and went to school in the eastern United States. My Ph.D. is from the College of William and Mary, in American Studies, with a focus on History and Cultural Studies. My research interests are in Native American, African American, and Early American History and Culture—with emphasis on the themes of colonialism and the cultural construction of knowledge, and I teach a variety of inquiry-driven courses based in these research interests. I have been at SUA since 2006, with my main home in the Humanities Concentration. In 2008, I affiliated with the Social and Behavioral Sciences Concentration.”

Michael Strand: “I grew up in Minnesota and attended SUA as a member of the fourth class of 2008. During my sophomore year I became involved in the SESRP by writing a paper for the 2006 Soka Education Conference on Soka education and sustainability. In 2008 I wrote another paper on the topic of Soka education and contributive revolution. This year’s paper grows out of my work for those conferences, as well as drawing from ideas I developed while writing my capstone project. My goal in life is to contribute to positive social change through humanistic education by working as a teacher and writer. In the future I would like to work with my fellow SUA students to found a Soka high school in America.”

Menelik Tafari is an undergraduate student at Soka University of America from the eighth class. Throughout his educational career, Menelik has spent his time giving back to the communities he felt a part of through conferences, workshops, dialogues and seminars founded upon the idea of problem-posing education and developed to break boundaries and create an atmosphere where people feel integral to the world in which they live. During high school, Menelik involved himself with a number of peer training organizations such as the Anti-Defamation League and the California Association of Student Councils whose purpose included empathy building, leadership training, development of conflict resolution skills, and community building. Menelik has directed and staffed over fifty leadership conferences for companies, universities, middle schools and high schools hoping to empower and inspire youth across the nation.

Cliff Tanaka graduated from SUA in 2008 with a concentration in IS. He is now working at Moving Forward Education and attending classes at the College of San Mateo. Moving Forward Education is a non-profit organization that provides mentoring and tutoring to K-12 students in Oakland, California. He is profoundly interested in education and is determined to devote his life to improving the quality of it. His dedication emanates from his conviction that the future of humanity and creating a harmonious society is contingent on human social, emotional, physical, and spiritual development; all of which education plays a vital role in cultivating. His aspirations for the future include serving as a superintendent for a school-district located within the San Francisco Bay Area as well as founding a K-12 school based on the principles and philosophies of Soka Education.”
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<th>Fumihiko Tominaga</th>
<th>G. Scott Williams</th>
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<td>graduated from SUA in 2008 with a concentration in IS and is also a graduate of Kansai Soka High School, receiving in total of 7 years of Soka Education. At SUA, he served as the History Department chairperson in his sophomore year and as the Attorney General of the SSU Executive Council in his senior year. Fumihiko is now attending at Monterey Institute of International Studies, pursuing MA in International Environmental Policy Studies. He will be serving as a Peace Corps volunteer for next two years starting summer 2009. His passion for environmental protection stems from his experiences during study abroad in Ecuador. One of his lifelong goals is to improve the quality of life for people in less developed countries by realizing one of the SUA principles, the creative coexistence of nature and humanity, in which people will enjoy both ecological and economic integrity.</td>
<td>“Continually filled with a desire to improve the world; I am a writer, photographer and philosopher. I sincerely believe in the power of education and strive to make it source for positive change in the world. With a deep passion for the oppressed in the world, I am striving to be instrumental in building a better world for every generation to come. This life is important; God has gifted me with great privilege and opportunity and so I give my life in service to protecting and restoring everyone and everything I come into contact with. It is my sincerest hope to discover with all students of Soka Education, a source of inspiration to remind us of the value of education and its role in our world. R.yu.alive.”</td>
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<th>Kristi M. Wilson</th>
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<td>received her Ph.D. from the University of California, San Diego in 1999 in Comparative Literature and has since then authored many publications among them Italian Neorealism and Global Cinema (Wayne State University Press, 2007), an Introduction to The Satyricon of Petronius (Barnes and Nobles, 2006), and several articles and reviews for academic journals such as Screen, the Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature, Signs, Literature/Film Quarterly, and others. Shortly after earning her Ph.D., Wilson was the recipient of a University of California Berkeley Summer Research Institute Fellowship and a University of California, Irvine, Humanities Research Institute Postdoctoral Fellowship. She then went to Stanford University as a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Humanities in the Introduction to the Humanities Program in 2000 where she taught several interdisciplinary humanities courses. She joined the Stanford Program in Writing and Rhetoric faculty in 2004 where she taught until coming to Soka University of America in the Fall of 2008.</td>
<td>“My name is David Witkowski, and I graduated from SUA in May, 2006. I am currently working on my masters in the MAPH (Masters of Arts Program in Humanities) at the University of Chicago. I am concentrating in philosophy/social thought and am expect to graduate in June of 2009. After graduating from SUA, I went to Japan to work at a preschool called Microcosmos. Although I initially wanted to go to graduate school immediately after SUA, I decided to work in Japan in order to accrue valuable life experience to enrich my studies. Working at Microcosmos enabled me not only to teach, but also to start and manage all of the affairs of an educational center. Eventually I want to start an educational research and after school center for children of all ages. I am also determined to realize Daisaku Ikeda's mission in building the United Nations for Education.”</td>
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Workshops Description

Monte Joffee
Keynote

Workshop based on presentation

Orin Kirshner
Professor

Fostering Democratic Global Citizens?
Reflections on Value Creation in the Core Curriculum

Tsunesaburo Makiguchi argues that the principal goal of education is to empower students to live a life of “value creation” (Makiguchi 1989, 28). He argues further that living such a life requires students to engage in “socially conscious living,” that is, a life of “self-awareness focused on the fulfillment of the social whole” and the “conscious pursuit of moral value” (37). But how does SUA prepare students to live a socially conscious life? How does it foster democratic global citizens? Working from the perspective of Makiguchi’s theory of "value creation," this workshop will explore these questions. It will do so through an open-ended discussion of Makiguchi’s theory of education-based social change with special reference to the pedagogical design of the core curriculum at SUA: The Enduring Questions of Humanity (Core I); and The Enduring Questions in Contemporary Context (Core II).
Menelik Tafari
Student

Experiential Learning

The process by which we reflect on experience and come to conclusions based on that experience is called closure or debriefing. This is when all real learning takes place. Closure is not just asking questions randomly. The questions you ask create a path that allows members of your group to think through an experience from beginning to end. This process is called the Experiential Learning Cycle. The learning cycle is based on the premise that while the experience is important, it is the process of learning that is more significant than the actual experience.

Since each of us experiences things in different ways, it is impossible to tell someone how to learn or what is important. We make these decisions for ourselves. With the learning cycle, participants can decide for themselves what is important.

Kristi Wilson
Professor

Ikeda’s Vision of Democracy in Education

In a series of discussions with Mikhail Gorbachev about Buddhism and communism, Daisaku Ikeda praises the dialogical approach to problem solving. He draws attention particularly, to Book I of Plato’s Republic, in which Socrates ranks democracy almost at the bottom of the hierarchy of political systems, just above tyranny. The Republic, staunchly anti-democratic and yet, hailed my many for its egalitarian stance on gender, becomes a central text in the Gorbachev-Ikeda dialogue. Ikeda cites Socrates’ fears of democratic mob rule as analogous with a contemporary regression of democratic ideals in the post-Cold War, “democratic” political landscape. Elsewhere, in his discussions of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi’s pedagogy, democratic ideals play a positive role as forces which level teacher and student relations by facilitating direct dialogue in the classroom at the risk of the teacher losing his or her aura of superiority.

In this workshop we will discuss Ikeda’s vision of the role of democracy in education and culture based on his interpretation of Plato’s Republic, Symposium, select dialogues and his writings about Makiguchi’s educational theories.
The Development of Ethics in a Globalized Society

G. Scott Williams

The senses are violated instantly when they come into contact with human trafficking. Reaching the ears are the faint cries, outright screams, or disgusted moans of women and children trapped in a system of slavery. The visual sense is stimulated by the surroundings in which these victims are confined - dirty, dingy, in a room tucked away somewhere from the prying eyes of society. The smells of urine, body odor – the combination of such senses pressing around on all sides can contaminate anyone who enters such a space. The sense of physical conditions is merely the surface of the problem because the ideological concepts that hold these captives in their prisons are much stronger than the physical conditions. There is an abuse of power as the victims are held against their will and deprived of the fundamental points of moral democracy. Options and a voice of protest: these are the two keys of democracy outside of its governing form, called moral democracy. Options entail that people have the ability to choose what they can do with their lives and a voice of protest meaning that they are able to speak out against anyone who interferes with their individual autonomy.

The business of human trafficking is a massive and illegal industry which deprives more than 25 million men, women and children, worldwide, of the moral democracy to which they are entitled (USDS). This system of human trafficking effects almost every country and deal heavily in supplying people as forced laborers as well as sexual slaves. The United States Department of State in their 2004 report stated that:

Each year an estimated 600,000 to 800,000 men, women, and children are trafficked across international borders... [Of these] 70 percent are female and 50 percent are children.

It is a business that thrives on the oppression of people and only by denying their rights to individual autonomy can it flourish. By eliminating the victims’ ability to oppose, withholding from them any form of moral democracy, can these oppressive forces function. Human trafficking is one of the notorious businesses which feed on oppression and for this reason is a most dangerous to democracy throughout the world. As humanity stands in the entry way of a new era in history, the global age, the offensives of human rights violations, violations of moral democracy must be confronted...
Human trafficking is an industry threatening a global opportunity for democracy (threatening the security of people as well).

An age in which human rights and moral democracy are necessary for global stability is incompatible with human trafficking. But trafficking will continue to exist as long as there is a desire for the services it provides. As long as a benefit can be reaped from trafficking, then human lives become nothing more than a means to an end and moral democracy becomes unimportant as it lacks the benefits that trafficking provides. The concept of what is beneficial is a fundamental issue which has affected even educational systems. It is within this context, searching for benefits, that we find the problem. Ikeda, the founder of Soka University of America states;

By its very nature, business is geared to economic efficiency and the pursuit of profit. A businessman who works strictly for the good of his enterprise alone will think only in terms of the bottom line. That narrow focus has given rise on occasion to competition so excessive as to blow up in military conflict. If business activities are to contribute to efforts towards peace, the logic of capital must be tempered by the logic of humanity (A New Humanism 29-30).

Human trafficking exists because our system of competition is money driven, and power driven, not people driven. The plight of millions of innocent people forcefully trafficked is not a concern to a system which is focused on money and power. The people, who are crushed for the sake of progress, are unimportant. This is the system which society has deemed acceptable; it is a capitalist, competition-driven way of life. It follows that the system, not surprisingly, in practice, favors competition over compassion, profit over people. In a system such as this, there is no benefit or personal value in helping the down-trodden. Benefits will come, only through competition, from crushing the opposition and improving one’s own situation.

The way that this capitalist life is practiced, the highest value is seen as the personal value and not the collective societal value. To a great and largely underestimated extent, global society is deeply influenced by this capitalist mindset. For this reason, democracy can not flourish. In order to maintain the current worldview, the system of competition must rob people of their rights and sense of compassion. Ikeda says that:

A victory of the spirit [of fairness] would also be a triumph of the logic of humanity over the logic of capital (A New Humanism 32).

In this profound insight, Ikeda makes the case that in a worldview which bases profit on the suffering of others, the logic of humanity remains unutilized. In order for the system of oppression to change, the logic of capital and our idea of what is beneficial must also change.

Countless movements have sought to change the injustice of placing progress before the moral democracy to which individuals are entitled. Many suggested ideas have been used as alternative forms of governmental structure, which can be seen in major arguments for the communist movement. However, I would argue that the way to change this wrong-footed ideology is through Soka Education.
Soka Education can effectively be used to transform the societal views of right and wrong—eventually rendering a system of oppression as wrong, inefficient and unacceptable in our world. This unique form of education, value creation education, has its basis in the student rather than benefits. Makiguchi, the founder of Soka Education said that;

Helping us to learn to live as creators of value is the purpose of education… Real education must deal with life as the learners live it (Education for Creative Living 54).

To understand what value creation is, is to understand what Soka Education is all about. In Education for Creative Living Makiguchi tells his readers that value is subjective and each individual has the potential to create different values in relation to various situations or concepts. Amid this subjective process of value creation, Makiguchi divided the system so that there are three levels at which value creation can be identified. The three levels are beauty, benefit and good. Makiguchi begins his discussion on these varied levels of value creation by stating that the first two are more geared towards individuals while the final, good, is geared towards society—collective humankind (Education for Creative Living 54).

The first is beauty, or sensory value, the primal value of things such as art and music. This includes anything that has a direct influence on sensory intake; things which are for aesthetic purposes and create emotion reactions in people.

The second is benefit, or personal value; something valuable for one’s own self interest which affects the overall livelihood of an individual. This value appears more selfish, or inward-looking, as it is the most self-seeking form of value creation. The personal value is interested in receiving benefits and can become dangerous if one is focused only on personal gains. In such cases, the moral democracy of another human being is unimportant so long as the individual receives their own benefits. Focusing only on this type of value creation is a cause of human trafficking. For example if someone desires a human slave, they then find value in the exploitation of another human being. This value satisfies and benefits of only one party, without considering the other party.

The final level of value creation teaches social values, that which is dependent on the welfare of society and every individual that makes up the society. In this way it is democratic and relies on the whole, without exclusion (Education for Creative Living 75-77).

The value Makiguchi talks about is value creation at its highest; a value that is beautiful (sensory value), beneficial (personal value) and good (societal value) (Education for Creative Living 54). This is the goal of Soka Education, to produce the highest value from every situation, event and fact. Because the societal value includes all humans, the global society, the personal value can not violate the rights of another human being. Therefore, the concept of personal value must be reevaluated. Competition that harms another person is not compatible with value creation, and is therefore not compatible with Soka Education.

Soka Education is an ideal educational system to promote democratic and humanistic ideals. But while this education is able to promote moral democracy, it must also be able to provide the benefits which are demanded from human trafficking,
otherwise, it must completely refocus society to have no desire for the benefits of human trafficking. In fact, Soka Education, the essence of value creation education, has the ability to:

1) Provide a sense of responsibility for the world’s problems

2) Shift societal views of what is beneficial, changing the system from competition to compassion.

3) Place moral values on education and promote moral democracy

4) By the combination of these first points, Soka Education will create ethics for our global society through which problems such as human trafficking can be resolved. [The development of ethics depends on points 1, 2, and 3]

Dialogue: providing a sense of responsibility

Ikeda emphasizes dialogue at the core of Soka Education; impressing upon students that dialogue is a means by which most problems can be resolved. However, dialogue alone is empty if it is just discussion. Ikeda bring in a powerful and subjective approach to dialogue, when he talks about dialogue being connected with our ability to show empathy to one another. In order to promote democratic ideals through Soka Education this profound concept must be understood. The way to archive peace and create a better world is through dialogue, which requires empathy. A call to dialogue is a call to empathy which is our human responsibility. The call of responsibility that Ikeda makes is:

We must establish respect for the inviolable dignity of human life as the core value of our age. Rather than turning away from the staggering scale and depth of misery caused by war, we must strive to develop our capacity to empathize and feel the sufferings of others. It is up to ordinary people—each of us—to voice our abhorrence of violence and war (The Power of Empathy 127).

Soka Education, unlike most forms of education, has core humanistic values at its base. This call to responsibility is seen as paramount in Soka Education as it plays a large role in altering the idea of pure capital to a humanistic capital. Responsibility in value creation means that it is impossible to seek benefits only for oneself, because there are other individuals who suffer and so benefits must be able to contribute to the higher level of value creation. There is a view held by Jonathon Sack, one of the world’s leading religious scholars who has written extensively on the subject of human responsibility, in which he states that:

A conception of human life without responsibility fails to do justice to human dignity, and is no way to ensure our survival as a species (To Heal a Fractured World 8).
This view is parallel to Ikeda’s, because without a sense of responsibility, there will be no chance for dialogue in order to strive for moral democracy and peace for all humanity. From this standpoint it seems that dialogue stands as a reminder of the human duty towards their fellow man; the call for dialogue and empathy immediately place a sense of responsibility – if individuals have empathy for one another then there is a greater sense of need and so a greater desire to help.

This sense of responsibility is an important feature for moral democracy to be achieved throughout the world. The efforts to end human trafficking and promote moral democracy are not as widespread or inclusive as they must be to put a stop to trafficking. However, with a sense of responsibility, facilitated though dialogue and coupled with empathy, the international community may be more apt towards seeking solutions for crisis such as these and restoring moral democracy to those who have been robbed of it.

Education as a means of shifting societal views

Throughout history there have been a number of events that reveal to us that movements for humanism can deeply influence societies. Soka Education, like many past movements has the ability to shift a societal concept of benefit from competition to a more humanistic compassionate approach. Jonathon Sack, in his book about societal responsibilities, made the statement that:

“[Life] is about sharing what we have, seeing possessions less as things we own than things we hold in trust, one of the conditions of which is that we use part of what we have to help others” (To Heal a Fractured World 5).

Although this seems like an idealistic concept far from reality, through the promotion of Soka Education throughout the world on a mass scale, this humanistic vision can naturally evolve into a common worldview. However, to shift the values of society from competition to compassion requires a deep inner struggle within the individuals in the society. The inner struggles have usually been fought by means of education, either the promotion of nationalistic or humanistic ideals. Despite the struggle, progress needs to direct society towards a humanistic approach with democracy at the forefront.

To further my point, in the second century, of the Common Era, the Roman Empire was an oppressive, imperialistic force which had little to no regard for human life, let alone moral democracy. However, an event took place that shook the foundation of Rome. A small group in the Roman territory of Palestine began to teach the values of peace, human rights and the sanctity of life, the same values held within Soka Education. This group, which would later be identified as Christians, prompted these values, and provided many in the empire an education, teaching them to read and write in order to further promote these values. It was this education based on values, which was the first major advance in globalizing the human race as they unified much of the Middle East, Mesopotamia and the European region (The Holy Bible; the Epistles of Paul).

Although the Christian movement was a religious based education, in the same manner, Soka Education can function as a catalyst for transforming the society in which it exists. The appeal of Soka Education to modern society is that it is secular and these
values can be taught and embraced by any person despite creed. Education is always a key means to enact change and must therefore be recognized and reformed in order to promote moral democracy as a universal value. In emphasizing the approach to education from a humanistic perspective and elevating education’s ability to create change, Ikeda states:

[T]he wellspring of peace is in your hearts. And education is the arduous labor of tapping that wellspring and making it flow forth strong and clear. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once asserted that society would be greatly imperiled if education taught efficiency and nothing else (The Mission of Soka University of America; Ikeda 2-3).

Moral education for an objective world

An examination of most first-world countries will immediately reveal that humans live in a world which is dominated by the advances of science. It is not at all a negative thing to have scientific knowledge and ability prominent in our lives. However, the way that science has been applied to society does pose a problem for the human condition. In the scientific worldview, there is no room for moral judgments. That is, a piece of information cannot be called good or bad, right or wrong, moral or immoral. This level of objectivity is important within the field of science; as it seems almost foolish that a scientist should say that the movements of an electron are moral or immoral. Science has given the global community many tools by which they could advance, but it seems that because of these advances there is an acceptance of the scientific worldview being applied to everyday human, and albeit subjective, situations. In a world that embraces competition over compassion, an objective stance to human interactions insures that the value of human rights and democracy, are almost completely marginalized.

That is to say; our intake of information is affected by this objective lens through which we view the world. News and all our information is thus reported as neither good nor bad, simply as something which is. There is, then, no value for human life and so no value for moral democracy. In his book Soka Education, Ikeda suggests that society should not allow for intellectual study and humanistic values to become disassociated (Soka Education 47). In another piece regarding the disconnect of humanism in education Ikeda states that;

Science and technology have given humanity undreamed-of power, bringing invaluable benefits to our lives and health. But this has been parallel by a tendency to distance ourselves from life, to objectify and reduce everything around us to numbers and things. Even people become things. The victims of war are presented as statistics; we are numbed to individual realities of unspeakable suffering and grief (Restore Our Connection to the World 51).

The Fourteenth Dalai Lama, an advocate for education, human right and democracy in the world, while writing on science and spirituality touched on the connection between science’s objective approach to reality and how human society as a whole takes the approach:
“Just as one’s fingers can function only in relation to the palm, so scientists must remain aware of their connection to society at large. Science is vitally important, but it is only one finger on the hand of humanity” (The Universe in a Single Atom 11).

At the heart of Soka Education, according to Ikeda, is a humanistic, subjective, approach which is determined to cultivate an individual completely, intellectually and with regards to values (Soka Education 35-50). Although Soka Education includes a subjective, value-based approach it should not be mistaken for religious education – as it does not require that students practice a particular faith. It is an educational system with an emphasis on the values of peace, human right and the sanctity of human life. These values, as Ikeda states, can be found in the world’s major faiths and are embraced by religious and irreligious people alike. This is a unique attribute of Soka Education: that while it is not compulsory religious education, it promotes a value system for students and rejects the completely objective and competitive modern worldview.

The idea of education without moral values may well lead to a destructive path. Ikeda held firmly to the idea that if the goal of education is only efficiency, adding to the current dominant system or promoting a predetermined cause, it would be harmful (The Mission of Soka University of America; Ikeda 2-3). As Johnathon Sack summarizes regarding education:

Ideas are what change people, for good or for bad. They affect how we interpret the world and what happens to us. They frame our imaginative horizon, at times lifting people to great heights, at others leading them to great folly or violence (To Heal a Fractured World 11).

The power of education must never be overlooked. It forms the lens through which a person views the world and their position of responsibility in it. Education can either create a lens that promotes competition and personal benefit; or it could create a lens that values democratic ideals. The way people view the world, will determine what happens in the world. It is therefore vitally important that all education, religious or public, promote the humanistic values of Soka Education. So long as people look through a lens that approves of violence and inequality, so long as a worldview where competition is more important than compassion is dominant, the global community is subject to the violent and oppressive consequences. Educators must therefore seek, as Makiguchi did, to help students, encouraging them to not be harmed by society’s ideals of complete objectivity.

All children should be afforded the opportunity to develop their potential limitlessly and to lead fulfilling lives undeterred by the destructive influences in society (Soka Education 37).

If an educator pursues their profession with this as a central goal then they are pushing Soka Education forward and contributing to a change in societal views. Students also, despite the educational system under which they are studying, must have a clear
idea of why they are studying. If they are studying for the sake of others, then they are also helping to change society by placing a value on moral democracy and human right, instead of studying just for themselves and their personal benefits which would promote the competition system of the modern world. Soka Education is not bound by institution or formal name, but is bound only by the mindset of individual students and teachers and must be revealed in all form of education to transform all education to humanistic education.

Developing ethics for global society

The force for democracy is education, as Ikeda states in The University of the 21st Century – Cradle of World Citizens:

Education and learning are, more than anything else, the motive force propelling the development of democracy….Democracy is a way of life whose purpose is to enable people to achieve spiritual autonomy, live in mutual respect and enjoy happiness. It also can be understood as an expression of human wisdom deployed toward the goal of harmonious coexistence. It is in this sense that it can be understood as a universal principle

When Ikeda speaks about education he is not referring to value-less education; but he is speaking of Soka Education as the force to propel democracy. Soka Education will produce moral democracy through the process of creating value. When there is a sense of injustice in the sight of oppression; a chance at freedom will be given—moral democracy will be given. Democracy, moral and governmental is at the forefront of Soka Education; because the three values at the base of this education, peace, human rights, and sanctity of life, demand moral democracy for every individual. Soka Education then demands governmental democracy because individuals are granted the right to options for their own autonomy and should thus be allowed to exercise the right to govern their lives. With globalization – the digital age and multimedia; democratic ideals already permeate minds in even the most oppressed regions of the world. Majid Tehranian, author and university professor stated:

Twenty-first century conditions are radically different from those of the nineteenth century when Britain could rule a vast empire with diverse but relatively docile populations. The new digital civilization has awakened millions of people around the world to their basic human rights, including the right of self-determination. (Rethinking Civilization 55)

Soka Education can create a sense of responsibility in the global community – promoting the values of this educational system. Institutions such as the United Nations can be bolstered and propagated by way of Soka Education. Soka Education, although not recognized by this name or the formal system established by Makiguchi, already exists in the world, as it is humanistic, and recognizes the needs of the world. The only way democracy has ever been achieved has been through value creation education. Makiguchi believed this so much so that he even said that value creation was the highest form of human activity (Education for Creative Living 54). Human society
has been blessed with a structured system of Soka Education; given by Makiguchi and Ikeda – and with this system, value creation education can be promoted more effectively. For democracy and for peace, the humanistic values of Soka Education must be widely institutionalized and embraced by individuals from all walks of life.

Trapped within the system of human trafficking, the millions who are imprisoned, and hidden from sight will not remain hidden away forever. The plight of the oppressed and the pain of the suffering will be extinguished through education. The insufferable condition under which our fellow human beings are living can be transformed if education is seen as a tool for the wellbeing of humanity, instead of a tool for individual gain. This educational system demands an end to oppression as displayed in human trafficking and is thus a force to deliver democracy to those imprisoned. Soka Education is currently developing ethics in this global age, and this ethical charge in the atmosphere will ignite the hearts of people to take action and bring forth democracy. Soka Education is itself, the root of the democratic spirit and must, therefore, be kindled in the heart of individuals to burn brightly on a global scale.
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Ecological Value-Creation and Political Transformation

Masashiro Louis

Introduction

Change. This simple word has become the battle-cry and vow of the newly elected American President and has inspired countless individuals from all across the world. With the election of the first African-American president in the world’s foremost super power, progressive standpoints seem to have more potential will than ever before. The thrust for change, however, is more seasonal than unique. Humans have progressed, redefined, and revived social systems since the conception of civilization itself (McNeil, 746). The exploration, or rather, the quest for the “ideal” human civilization has continuously been on the minds of not only scholars, political movers, or possessors of power, but of everyday people. Constantly the citizens of America have asked themselves: “Can so-and-so in society be improved? Can our collective lives, whether political or economic, change?” In the same spirit, I will approach this year’s conference topic Soka Education and Democracy as a quest to better prescribe political and social contexts to shed light on our ongoing project of Soka Education. This paper will look at how Makiguchi’s approach served as an innovative and creative response to the non-life-sustaining political ideology of his era. In the Geography of Human Life, an essentially ecological viewpoint of the world is provided to offer solutions to a troubled age. Makiguchi provided a blueprint of how an ecological and humanistic perspective could deeply address the misled political philosophy of early 20th century Japan and thus restore harmony to both Japan and the world at large (xiii). His creative attempt serves as a valuable example for those who wish to effectively and seriously bring about effective change in the world.

Historical Context of the Geography of Human Life

Last year’s conference Soka Education and Contributive Revolution focused on revolution or change on a grassroots, philosophical, and individual level. This year’s theme contains a more political viewpoint, urging participants to create a dialogue between the progressive educational thought of Makiguchi and the values of democracy. Makiguchi developed his views during the beginning of the 20th century, an era of massive imperialist expansion and exploitation by the world’s western powers. Imperialism fueled an age of aggressive expansion, creating massive tensions in the international arena (Ward, 197). Colonization spread throughout the Americas, Africa,
and deep into the remote islands of the Pacific. Japan and other smaller nations aggressively sought to adapt likewise so as to survive through the times.

The seeds of Makiguchi’s era perhaps sprouted during the Meiji Era (1865-1945). During this time, the Meiji oligarchy toppled the Tokugawa bafuku and sought to centralize power under the Meiji emperor (ibid). A line of imperial descendants would serve as the unifying figurehead for a new, progressive Japan, based on a largely fictional history of an “unbroken” line of emperors who sprung from the divine hand of the sun goddess herself. Various factions loyal to the old system rebelled, leading the nation into a brief civil war with the modern Meiji army as victor. A period of massive modernization in defense against western exploitation soon followed once domestic stability was achieved. The Meiji government would invite both British and French militaries to educate Japanese soldiers in the ways of modern warfare (Ward, 201). With such western technologies, Japan could use comparable defense tactics against aggressive western superpowers and thereby become Asia’s very own superpower. This status was signified by Japan’s stance in the Russo-Japanese war (ibid).

Following a period of massive military advancement, the Japanese government began developing its educational system in an ultra-nationalistic way. Using the values of the old Samurai bushido code, the education system infused the youth with national fervor and loyalty (205). Service and duty to one’s country was foremost in comparison to all duties, coming prior to responsibilities to one’s family and one’s own ambitions. In fact, the nation became a central concept within the household, making loyalty to one’s nation synonymous with loyalty to one’s family (199). A sacred relationship bound the youth to his or her immediate family, local community, and finally the national family. At the top of the nation stood the divine emperor, the figurehead and living deity of the Shinto nation. Ultimately, a nationalistic themed religious connection directed the nation and brought about social order through the means of a police state.

Military advancement and nationalistic education were only part of the domestic movements of Makiguchi’s age. Concurrently, industrialization boomed in epic proportions with the emergence of new technologies in large-scale energy and massive economic development (Makiguchi, xiii). Being the largest driving forces of the age, Makiguchi witnessed the effects of imperialism, industrialization, and militarism on his own community and the world at large. In fact, he considered his local community as a microcosm of the entire world (19). Close observation around Makiguchi’s own room revealed evidence of the globalizing forces of imperialism and industrialization:

On my desk is a kerosene lamp; it is silent, though the oil inside might well be saying, ‘I sprang from the foot of the Caucasus Mountains along the coast of the Caspian Sea and arrived here after traveling thousands of miles.’ My glasses have lenses produced with skill and precision by people in Germany (9).

Along with the furniture of his room, Makiguchi’s world was adorned with institutions, transportation systems, cuisine, education and fashion—reflecting a progressive, global culture. Fascinated by the external influences of his personal environment, Makiguchi’s work challenged contemporary minds to see beyond the national ideological constraints
of his time, and creatively examine the forces of life, nature, and society that define the human experience (21).

Much of Makiguchi’s historical context was definitely progressive; however it was clearly lacking the values of democracy. Progress and change was occurring at an ever-accelerating rate. To keep pace with the aggressive conditions of the international arena, Japan’s national agenda was not developed by the masses, but was instead managed and executed by the political elites under the banner of Imperialism (Ward, 206). According to Dewey, unless society is mobilized by progressive social movements, democracy loses its meaning (Caspary, 178). Without the political will and tolerance for social change driven by the people, democracy cannot take hold. In like kind, social movements require active citizen participation. Without a well-educated and free-thinking citizenry, peaceful democratic change is impossible (ibid). Here the relationship between education and a political system reveals whether a society is governed with a socially democratic ethos, or an anti-democratic stranglehold. In his work, Makiguchi is able to address both the lack of political freedom and the related environmental challenges from a geographical perspective.

Makiguchi’s Ecological and Educational Ideology

With both imperialism and industrialization in mind, Makiguchi pondered the trajectory of his homeland and later gave expression to his thought in Geography of Human Life (1903). Being a teacher of geography, Makiguchi’s ideas found expression in the subject matter of his expertise. Much of his work contains a discussion on topics commonly discussed in geography: the water-systems, mountains, plains, seas, oceans, climate and human interaction with all of the above (301). The emphasis in Makiguchi’s work, however, is the relationship between people and the earth (11). In his view, the earth is not simply a scientific object of study or a mere composition of matter external to our subjective lives; instead, our environment is an intimate part of our lives that affects us on a practical and subconscious level. Japan’s nationalistic advancements and the global trend towards imperialism and industrialization concerned Makiguchi, because he saw these forces as ignorant of the profound connection between human life and the environment which supports its existence (13). The world culture shifted in the early 20th century to view nature as something to be conquered and recklessly subordinated to industrial ends (xiii). The lack of this essential relationship between humans and their environment led Japan towards creating a “misguided cosmopolitanism.”(13) Here we see in Makiguchi’s early thought the roots of Global Citizenship, a concept found in Soka education’s hundred year history.

Makiguchi considers the life of the earth as a miracle (xiv). The earth was a complex organism consisting of various natural features and the multitude of species which it sustained. Just as an ecosystem contains a number of different deeply interdependent species, Makiguchi views the earth as a massive ecosystem, self-sustaining if the human species interacts in harmonious fashion (44). And human beings can be seen as a super-species, the most influential of species in terms of its effect on the environment. Through living daily life and recognizing the deep connection and dependency humans have with their environmental surroundings, life can be appreciated and lived fully in accordance with human nature. Human nature, Makiguchi argues, is
not in total agreement with the self-driven economic values of industrialization; human beings naturally possess a deeply emotional and subconscious connection to the earth, a sense that today’s scholars call ‘biophilia’ (Wilson, 1). Makiguchi beautifully expresses this sense by explaining the relationship between a person and a mountain:

Whenever we look up, the mountains are there: an integral part of our world, friends. As children we grow up in the shadows of the mountains and come to love them almost as we love our parents. Their presence grows within our minds and deeply affects our lives and personalities, unconsciously. So we can say that the mountains educate us and contribute to the kinds of persons we become (62).

As the mountain is a part of a person’s being, so is the river, the seas, the islands, and the plains. Normally seen as “locations” of human activity, Makiguchi presents such locations as part of the entire experience of human life. A hiker no longer hikes into a valley to simply see the valley, he or she goes to fuse with the life of the valley and thus create a spiritual dialogue (28). This level of connection, perhaps more subconscious than recognizable is best described as the “vibe” of a place. Throughout his work, Makiguchi regards the spiritual connection between humans and the earth as a foundational idea and an essential viewpoint that is missing in his contemporary context.

Education, according to Makiguchi, requires direct experience between the learner and his or her natural environment. Such interaction would provide the learner the opportunity of direct observation, whether the learner is engaging natural or social environments (21). The contemporary institutions of Makiguchi’s age severed the ties between students and their environments by isolating them in classroom settings. Industrialization supported values geared towards maximizing profits and directing human labor towards environmentally-unsustainable ends; likewise students were indoctrinated with such thinking (xxix). Children, cut off from their natural environments, communities, and societies at large were adversely affected since their educational experience lacked a relationship with the larger social and ecological context. In imperial Japan students learned not to develop their creative and critical faculties; instead they were told to direct much of their effort towards memorization:

In view of this wealth of examples and information all around us, it is astounding that so many people, and teachers in particular, neglect….basic and profound observation and just sticks to books, using all their energy in memorizing. They read, forget what they have read, so start to read again, forgetting, reading, forgetting, reading…and on and on. (20)

This rote memorization method symbolized the non-intimate relationship between students and their subject mater, creating useless academic activity rather than developing the capacities of the learner. In Makiguchi’s educational theory, education serves to liberate students by enhancing their powers of perception, critical observation, and creativity (22). Rather than treating students as imperial subjects serving the ends of imperialism and the industrial economy, Makiguchi contends that education should serve
to nourish the innate intellectual powers of students through intimate connection with natural phenomenon:

I am convinced… that in the beginning of life there is very little difference between people. Every person has inborn natural talents and potential. Then why do these differences come about? I believe it hinges upon whether or not a person learns to see and grasp the true nature of phenomena with penetrating insight and understanding. (20-21)

Perhaps somewhat difficult to grasp at first, Makiguchi’s point is backed with numerous examples of geniuses whose discoveries depended upon their perceptive and creative powers. Jean Louis Agassiz, Dante, and Peter the Great are a few of the examples Makiguchi lists. Albert Einstein perhaps is the best example of an individual whose curiosity, keen perception, and creativity lead him to unlocking the mysterious properties of light. Einstein was deeply fascinated by the properties of light and how light manifested in various settings (AMNH). Though he was thrown out of math class as a young man for being a poor student, his creative talents led him to discover the foundation of a brand new kind of physics. This kind of intimate connection between human life and the world around is necessary for students to “hone” and reveal inherent genius.

Value Creation and Democracy

Just as democratic ideals aim to enable citizens to transform their lives by respecting the individual rights and liberties of a citizen, Makiguchi holds that education ought to empower students through deepening their awareness to the interconnectedness between humans and the environment. Makiguchi’s thought echoes a socially democratic theme by advocating active community involvement over the nationalistic agenda of the time. Students were not to be educated through memorizing useless bits of information, unrelated to their immediate realities; instead Makiguchi sees education as the means by which people become fully human, fully themselves, and in like fashion become fully integrated into society and, ultimately, the world. Without a political will that respects and encourages the free thought and creative contribution (as well as dissidence) of its population, such education is impossible. Yet, healthy democracy also indicates that its people are not machines subjugated to external ends, but are rather integrated, contributive, people — citizens. The 21st century offers new environmental difficulties and social change in ways unimaginable to Makiguchi and the people of his day. But one truth will endure, if democracy is to continue to evolve healthfully, each person must become supremely capable of forging a peaceful and sustainable world.

A Geography of Human Life was written to an audience of Japanese citizens who were raised as Japanese loyalists. Makiguchi sought to sow the seeds of democratic ideals through transforming the way his countrymen viewed both the process of education and their immediate environment. He wished that they appreciate the magnificence of the world around themselves and see how the contemporary trends of industrialization and imperialism pale in comparison. Ultimately, Makiguchi desired to transform the culture and ideology of his homeland into a more “ideal” society. In such
an ideal society humans could transform the way society runs and operates in an entirely humanistic level, even transforming negative forms of competition into humanitarian competition¹ (285). Some may argue with such thinking and indict the entirety of Makiguchi’s though as naïve of our realities at large; such critics forget, however, that the current realities necessitate creative solutions to prevent global collapse. As Daisaku Ikeda states in *Soka Education*, value-creation education seeks to address the fundamental crisis of civilization (173). Value-creation would mean different things in accordance with the varying demands of the age. According to Gorbachev in the *Manifesto for the Earth*, an ecological transformation of global values still stands as a top priority for our age (123). Global warming, deforestation and water shortages are just some of the environmental issues facing us today. In addition, a global network of varying levels of development, political ideologies, and a dynamic global economy is growing exponentially despite such harm (Tehranian, 199). The danger of untamed human activity that results in neglecting our ties to the environment grows each day. Makiguchi’s challenge now stands as a contemporary challenge in our age, thus continuing the legacy and creative battle of value-creation. Accomplishing such a task is all up to our *creative will*.

¹ Humanitarian competition is defined as the most sophisticated mode of competition within a “developed” society. According to Makiguchi competition would progress from military, political, economic, and finally humanitarian modes.
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Votes to Grades: A Comparative Study on Democratic Decision-Making in Modern Society

Jean Marcus Silva

Chinese Democracy

Democracy is often overrated. This is not a statement to draw attention to the evils of democracy and proclaim me supreme leader of the world. Nevertheless, many world citizens understand democracy in ways that it was never portrayed. They look at democracy as a liberating entity that will vanish all evildoers from their sight; instantly. What they forget is that the power of democracy lives in the power of people themselves, whenever they have the power to choose. That brings us to voting. Democratic voting is the only process that can truly be considered democratic because that is the moment that everyone acquires their right to choose, or at least demonstrate their intention of choice, therefore the desire of everybody. The right to choose puts everyone in a position in which they can express their deepest dreams and wildest hopes as a mechanism of society. It seems that there is a peculiar beauty in voting. There is beauty in the quantitative quality of voting. There is beauty in degree.

Another aspect of our lives that possesses the same kind of question but in a different frame is education. When it comes to teaching there are several methods and theories, but nowadays it seems that the more progressive theories do justice to all parts in the process of education. (Freire 1970) Freire suggests that dialogue between students and professors can provide a proper environment where knowledge can evolve, and not just be transmitted. However, in most schools assessment of developed knowledge is usually translated into a letter or number. Although I assume that the ideal grading

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1 All subtitles are named after songs and nothing beyond the titles are related to the present work.
system for progressive education is narrative evaluation, the current grading system translates all body of knowledge, developed or acquired, into a simple symbol. But this does not seem to satisfy my understanding of democratic voting or grading. Therefore, I will propose to twist the analyses of democracy by taking a fresh stance that ignores the hopes and results that might come from this approach and solely analyzes the nature of our current methods, thereby identifying better ways of dealing with our practical applications of democratic decision-making methods in terms of voting and grading.

Musical Chairs Party Game

Let us be simple and consider a small election in a company that will vote for the new representative of a sector. There are 3 choices: Astolf (A), Belicov (B) and Cardoso (C). The three heads of the company will decide who is going to be promoted through democratic voting and the result of the election is the following:

**Head 1:** A > B > C  
**Head 2:** B > C > A  
**Head 3:** C > A > B

None of the employees is preferred by the heads and more interestingly, none of them has an advantage over the others. They are in a hard draw. This paradox, known as Condorcet’s paradox, is named after the man who discovered it. And let us notice something quite interesting in these choices: If one of the employees decides that he does not want to run for a leadership position and leaves the competition, something happens to the choices. Consider what happens if Belicov leaves the election:

**Head 1:** A > B  
**Head 2:** B > C = A > C  
**Head 3:** C > A > B = C > A

It seems that if Belicov leaves, the draw which should remain is dissolved and Astolf wins! What if Astolf decides to leaves instead?

**Head 1:** A > B > C = A > C  
**Head 2:** B > C > A = C > A  
**Head 3:** C > A > B = C > A

Now it is Cardoso that ends up winning! If Condorcet’s paradox happens, the best way to win a poll is to eliminate the right contestant than to wait for the people’s choice.

The possibility of this to happen is 5.6%. Small, but if you raise the number of candidates and voters, the possibility can easily arrive near 100%. (Mori 2008) So what exactly is democratic about it?

*Arrow of time F 12 Strings*
Before venturing into the process of voting for grading let us try to understand what it truly means for a voting process to be democratic. That brings us to Arrow’s impossibility theorem.

Kenneth Arrow was a Nobel Laureate economist who put together a theorem in respect to social choice. He says that a vaguely reasonable voting process would, most times, reflect the preference of the electoral poll. (Barrow 1998) And by a vaguely reasonable voting process, he proposes that the following series of conditions must be fulfilled:

**Unrestricted freedom of individual choice:** Every voter ought to have the liberty to choose whichever they want.

**Irrelevant alternatives should have no effect:** If you would choose cheese instead of eggs, it would matter not if a huge piece of non-material blue duck foot magically appears; Your preference for cheese instead of eggs would not change.

**Pareto’s Efficiency (social choice should positively reflect individual choices):** named after the Italian economist. If some people like cats and others like platypus and an election regarding this preference is taken, the results of the election should represent those preferences in the appropriate ratio.

**The voice of people counts:** The results of an election cannot be the product of an imposition. The social choice should represent the individual choice and cannot be directly influenced by a social choice imposed from outside.

**Not-dictatorial:** it has to represent the desire of all voters, not just of one big dictator. A political system that does not follow these criteria would be considered a paradox as seen in the example of the company sector representative election. In his analysis of all political systems, Arrow was lead to think that a system free from paradox was a system in which a unique voter would determine the events of a poll. In other words, only in a ‘dictatorship’ would a paradox in voting systems be eliminated. (Barrow 1998)

**Talking about my generation**

Looking at grades in regards to a democratic voting process, candidates become the grades (the ones which have to be chosen), professors become voters, and the supporters of candidates become the students. It would not take more than understanding this simple transposition to realize that selection of grades is a dictatorship.

I would extend this concept to include not merely the letter or numeric grades, but also narrative evaluations because the ultimate choice still remains with the teacher although other individuals in the community have their own preferences regarding what grade you should get. Even if we were to add more voters, such as students, to select the grades, the problem will not go away. It may leave the realm of dictatorship but it would venture into the realm of the voting paradox proposed by Condorcet. Is there hope for a democratic method of assessment in education, or does education create value only when it is placed outside of the context of evaluation?

**A little help from my friends**

Is it possible to attain democracy though voting or grading, or will democratic decision-making always lead to dictatorship/paradox? Arrow’s prepositions are only valid in a rational context. He fails to account how people’s choices are not usually
determined by reason. (Barrow 1998) Within rational terms the dictatorship seems to be the most appropriate solution, but empirically, most people’s choices don’t seem to follow logical thinking. (Mori 2008)

However, most impressive preposition of Arrow’s impossibility theorem is Pareto’s Efficiency, which actually states the true meaning of democracy: the only way to achieve a democratic election is when the results of the election represent the exact ratio of each individual choice. This means that that grading and voting would be democratic only when it represents the preference of each voter—the electoral memory. It happens that an 18th century French mathematician, Jean-Charles Borda, was already thinking about these problems and developed a way to better retain the electoral memory. Let’s us reconsider the previous company’s choice of the new representative as a way to illustrate what became known as the Borda count. Instead of considering each preference on its own, each position (first, second or third) is awarded points. The first gets 3 points, the second 2, and the third 1. Transposing the company’s election into the Borda count, we see that there is still a draw. If one of the candidates leaves, the results are still a draw because the electoral memory was maintained. (Mori 2008)

The Borda count is not perfect, which according to Arrow is improbable in the first place, but maintaining the electoral memory does remove most of the paradoxes. For example, at least it’s no longer possible to win an election by eliminating the right candidate. The biggest problem resides in the fact that although we are now aiming for Pareto’s Efficiency to demonstrate the demographic preference of a specific public, because of our logical limitations, we can only select one representation for all people (or papers.) It is easy to understand that a democracy could be easily installed as a political choice through the senate system, but it is more difficult to relate grades to Pareto’s Efficiency. Can we create a senate of grades?

Be true to your school

Welcome back to grades and the understanding of this peculiar part of education, which for progressive education seems to be irrelevant as assessment methods are not found anywhere between Makiguchi and Freire. Their understanding of education was beyond evaluation as they were more concerned about the process (the humanization of Freire) and happiness (the value creation of Makiguchi.) (Freire 1970) (Makiguchi 1936) Any educational experience is subjective to our own living and desires that it would be difficult for anyone, besides us, to assess what has truly evolved in our body of knowledge within the process. As long the students feel human or happy, they do not need any other evaluation besides the attainment of those manifestations, which would be irrelevant for societal purposes. I understand that the aim of these two educators is not to objectify any aspect of education and therefore it should not be a concern whether those methods of evaluation would meet society’s expectations. But those are highly idealistic motifs. I could not agree more with Makiguchi and Freire, but that is why I am just trying to bridge the gap between grading in the letter, number, and narration fashion and the ideals for progressive education.

Both Freire and Makiguchi’s thoughts on education are closely related to Pareto’s Efficiency because what determines the social choice mirrors each individual choice. Their theories do not directly reflect Pareto’s Efficiency in terms of the outcome of those individual choices because it seems that it was obvious that social choice would reflect
individual choices, as the social environments for education (classroom) were highly regarded by both of them. (Freire 1970) (Makiguchi 1936)

Now our challenge is to identify the best way to classify into grades those individual choices so that they reflect the social choice. We cannot let the choices of the most suitable grade be based on a dispute against other grades. We have to understand what it is that has to be represented as the social choice based on the individual choices of the classroom.

A, B, C...

In traditional methods of evaluation, what are in stake are our results, as in papers or presentations or participation. It seems that the choices of grades are little related to the real progress of the character of the student. The results, the materialistic results that the student can produce will determine how good or bad he is. The current grading system seems extremely off according to what progressive educators proposed, but let’s use those assessments as our base so we can become more organically materialistic.

The individual choices here would be what the community of the classroom conjecture about the results of a particular student. In transposition to a political election, the entire classroom community would be a specific body of voters that could decide what they desire and think on several polls. If they share a symbiotic relationship inside of the classroom, those relationships should be represented into each individual grade.

The attempt to grade according to Pareto’s Efficiency would be something quite interesting and difficult to attain. Each student, plus the professor, would have to evaluate each one of the products of each one of the students in their respective classrooms, in accordance to the system (grade, number, etc) that is also selected by the entire community, which, by following Pareto’s Efficiency, would become a mix of letters, numbers and narrations. And that decision would not represent what the students learn nor reflect the body of knowledge that is attained, but it would only democratically represent what that classroom recalls from that student.

The more I think about those grades, the more it seems unpractical and irrelevant to attribute them in an educational environment. It seems that we are closing ourselves in narcissistic exercises on how good can we be in a determinate environment. Even in this more democratic perspective, the shallowness of those attributions adds nothing to the true meaning of education itself. Could we venture further and find a way to create a value creation environment for assessments?

< The Pareto’s Grand Finale>

My answer will be simple. There is value when those decisions are truly democratic. Both Freire and Makiguchi understand that human beings can only be human in a social environment. The process or value creation means nothing if individual are isolated, and that’s why Pareto’s Efficiency becomes stronger in this context. Although a democratic method of grading, after the hard work of accounting for all the individual choices, says nothing about the individuals themselves, they do talk about individuals inserted in a given social context. In fact, the individual knowledge that is acquired and cannot be taken into account means nothing, and only the grades, now as a social context, represent the individuals.
This way, when someone is being assessed, what is taken into consideration is their full individual choice in a social framework, which in the beginning is the representation of all individual choices. So, if a specific individual receives several assessments regarding their product in a specific classroom, they are in fact assessed not for what they produce, but for what that product means in a social framework (and the argument circulates over and over in this assertion).

I am not sure if the present solution for a democratic grading system is a practical one, but it definitely tries to balance the ideals of progressive education and the current grading method. Ultimately, the understanding of a democracy in our educational system establishes what democracy should mean to everyone. It is not a decision of the majority. It is a representation of everyone.
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Makiguchi and Democracy: The Philosophy of Value-Creative Education in an Evolving World

Michael Strand

Abstract

This paper will examine Makiguchi’s foundational framework for his theory of value-creative education, and argue that each person is able to use his or her knowledge, experience, and morals to create value in the community and the world. I will use Kant’s *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals* to argue the idea that freedom, reason, and the ability to act ethically is equal in all rational beings. This idea will be used as the philosophical basis for examining the foundation of American democratic ideals. Works by Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, William Lloyd Garrison, John F. Kennedy, and Martin Luther King Jr. will serve to display how these ideas have influenced the progression of democracy as an evolving process based on universal ideals. By comparing this analysis of democracy to Makiguchi’s ideas, I suggest that democracy benefits from the skills of dialogue, free-thinking, lifelong learning, and community engagement found in Makiguchi’s pedagogy. Freedom allows for value-creative education to thrive in society; while, simultaneously, Makiguchi’s pedagogy contributes to healthy democracy by nurturing the life-long pursuit of learning by free-thinking individuals. In essence, I argue that education is the essential element maintaining the healthy evolution of social democracy from the grass roots to the global level. And further, that Soka Education and democracy share a symbiotic relationship, where the ideal of political freedom relates directly to intellectual freedom, and that the pursuit of happiness through Kant’s categorical imperative is, in essence, value creation.
Kant's Categorical Imperative as a Foundation for Democracy

Kant, like many philosophers, was obsessed with the problem of ethics and what should dictate what is right and good. Through his life-long work he attempted to create a metaphysics of right, seeking to discover the fundamental law of morality and ethics available to the human mind. He argued that the laws of physics, material laws, act “according to which everything does happen” and dictate our senses and experience in the material world... Ethics and morals, on the other hand, are a part of an entirely different realm altogether, the realm of pure consciousness. The laws of this intelligible world are created by the workings of consciousness itself, and affect the material world through choices made with free will.

Kant’s contention was that the laws of consciousness [ethics] “are those according to which everything ought to happen.” This ‘ought’ is what he calls the categorical imperative, a law of reason which always holds true in all cases to answer the question of what is right. He defines his moral imperative many ways in his *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785), but this is its essence: “I should never act except in such a way that I can also will that my maxim should become a universal law.” With this powerful statement Kant argues that each action must be extended to all others capable of taking the same action so that such action ‘should become a universal law.’ Each action we make, based on our reason, is a choice available to all rational beings. And that this choice must never be contingent only on the material world, what he calls a ‘hypothetical imperative’, because wrong actions done for the sake of ‘good’ are still wrong, and will always lead to outcome befitting the violation of the categorical imperative. Thus Kant asserts: “These moral laws also consider the conditions under which what ought to happen frequently does not.” Unethical actions, which violate one’s “duty” as a rational being, are “subjective ends, which rest on incentives” and do not consider the free choice of others, while “objective ends, depend on motives valid for every rational being.” Each action we make must be based on this objective moral aim, an imperative for action which is never conditional and is always categorical.

Kant’s contention with the categorical imperative is that each rational being is capable of understanding the intelligible truth of what is right and wrong, and that this is possible only because morality is a fundamental law of the rational mind. The truth of the categorical imperative is not a law of nature, but a law of reason. Thus, if the categorical

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2 Ibid., 1
3 Ibid., 14
4 Ibid., 1
5 Ibid., 35

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imperative holds as equally valid for all rational beings, “then it must be already connected (completely *a priori*) with the concept of the will of a rational being.”6 The *a priori* nature of the categorical imperative is superior over the constraints of conditional circumstances, and is used by Kant as a datum of pure consciousness which serves as the axiomatic starting point for a system of ethics.

Any being capable of reason, Kant argued, can be called a person, and thus he or she must be respected with unalienable dignity. Only morality and human beings are truly worthy of respect, because there can be no material value attached to them. Things can be replaced, bought and sold, but rational beings [people] are capable of reason, free will, and ethical action, and therefore, are beyond being a mere means to and end. Kant states:

> “Every rational being, exists as an end in himself and not merely as a means to be arbitrarily used by this or that will. He must, in all his actions, whether directed to himself or to other rational beings, always be regarded at the same time as an end.”7

What is meant by this statement is that all rational beings must always be treated as an end unto themselves in all cases because each is like me, a person. The categorical imperative relies on the reason and free will of rational beings to dictate ethical choice common to all rational beings. The process of testing the categorical imperative in the crucible of life proves its validity, for Kant says that even a despicable person knows what is right and only acts otherwise out of selfishness. All rational beings know that one’s actions affect other rational beings, and that because these actions affect others, one’s actions should take all others into consideration because, “every other rational being thinks of his existence on the same rational ground that holds also for me.”8

Because of this absolute nature of the categorical imperative, it must never violate itself; this is to say that free will is limited by the constraints of the categorical imperative. One is free to act in any way he or she likes in the material world, without considering others, but in the world of pure consciousness, one must always consider the other because, the “principle of humanity and every rational nature...as an end in itself, is the supreme limiting condition of every man’s freedom of action.”9 Kant is saying here that if the categorical imperative is true, and every free act legislates ethical choice as a universal law, then oppressing the selfsame freedom to others is the one and only limiting factor on our freedom. Our actions must never infringe on the rights of others; but, rather, must instead contribute to the wellbeing of our fellow rational beings.

Kant gives the example of a person who is very talented, is quick witted and intelligent, but does not want to use his or her gifts to benefit others. This person says live and let live, never lifting a finger to help, but never harming others either. Kant says that this laziness in the use of one’s faculties for the benefit of others is a violation of the categorical imperative. If this person were to extend his moral choice to all other rational beings as a universal law, then he could never say that all people should act this way. Kant concludes that rational beings must necessarily will “that all his faculties should be

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6 Ibid., 34
7 Ibid., 35
8 Ibid., 36
9 Ibid., 37
developed, in as much they are given him, for all sorts of possible purposes." Therefore, contributing to the well being of others who live with us in human society must be a core value of anyone upholding the categorical imperative. This idea is very important in our study of Soka education, because it is this same idea that provides the foundation for Makiguchi’s pedagogy.

I am attempting to argue through this analysis of Kant, that the law of ethical action [categorical imperative] is not contingent on physical laws, but is rather only contingent on reason, the intelligible world, where freedom of will flows from one’s self as a legislator of universal laws, a sovereign of what Kant calls the ‘kingdom of ends’. True social justice comes when all people see themselves as equal sovereigns of the realm of ethics and free will, that each person should be respected with unalienable rights to the happy pursuit of life based on the supreme law of ethics. And that one can only belong to this kingdom of ends, a kingdom of the realm of pure consciousness, if and only if “we carefully conduct ourselves according to maxims of freedom as if they were laws of nature.”

The fundamental spirit of democracy is in line with Kant’s careful metaphysical reasoning, and affirms the democratic ideals that all can be free, under the rule of just law, to pursue one’s happiness in life by living as a citizen of other free and equal people. Kant, among many other philosophers of the Enlightenment, carefully considered the metaphysical foundation for truth, free will, equality, and ethics. The work of that time has since translated into the institution of an ideology we call modern democracy, and the democratic spirit of today is rooted in the soil of the revolutionary discoveries of Kant and others like him. But Kant was a philosopher, and so he left the responsibility for actualizing the categorical imperative in the real world to those who would follow in his footsteps. The rest of this paper is dedicated to the work of value creators who gave their lives for their ideals, but never once called for violence or war to overthrow the yoke of oppression and tyranny.

II

Kant and Makiguchi: Education for the Sake of Personal and Social Happiness

In his Education for Creative Living (1936) Makiguchi focused on education as the only means of establishing a truly just and prosperous society. But not just any kind of education would do, only education that fundamentally treats each individual as an end unto themselves, unconditionally entitled to free thought and action. I have previously established that Kant’s categorical imperative is the basis of happiness and freedom. This is qualified by Kant’s statement: “A good will seems to constitute the indispensable condition of being even worthy of happiness.” Like Kant, Makiguchi held the happiness of individuals as his primary goal of inquiry. His life as a teacher and student of geography led him to conclude that education should foster a student’s humanity and

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10 Ibid., 31
11 Ibid., 61
12 Ibid., 7
therefore, their happiness. Yet, the kind of happiness that Kant and Makiguchi advocate is not selfish, material happiness, nor un-governed anarchy, but rather a spirit of ethical contribution to others. Kant’s idea that freedom must be held to the ethical constraints of the categorical imperative is reflected in the social aspect of Makiguchi’s concept of happiness as living as a contributive individual within society:

“Some people may resist accepting happiness as the purpose of education because they consider it to be a selfish, personal goal, but as we examine it rationally as a social phenomenon, we will find a broader definition of happiness as a responsible goal of life.”

During the time when Makiguchi was developing his ideas about education, the Japanese government was using education to build loyal subjects who were then consumed by the military war machine, violating the categorical imperative by using its citizenry as a means to unethical ends. This was one of the primary driving forces in Makiguchi’s study of education and his call for educational as well as social change. Makiguchi’s biographer Dayle Bethel states, “in Makiguchi’s view Japanese education was stifling and destroying the creative potential of children rather than releasing and developing that potential.”

To remedy this situation Makiguchi advocated that education must never subjugate the happiness of individuals for the sake of achieving other ends. The process of education, he argued, is what nourishes equality and reason, the means by which ethical action is formulated, and thus a just society must be based on a just educational system. For Makiguchi, the role of education and the educator is to peacefully encourage social and cultural change. Peaceful change, based on universal principles, is central to his pedagogy as well as democracy.

People, as educated, concerned, and engaged citizens must keep a watchful eye on politics and live as active participants in society. Each individual must see him or her self as a social guardian whose duty it is to defend and promote social freedom and the equality of all people. In essence, for a healthy democratic society to thrive, Makiguchi held that education must make the development of free-thinking and socially responsible individuals its primary task. Democratic government borrows its power from the will of the people, the most prodigious source of power for a nation is its people, and the only way to truly foster people is through education.

Kant and Makiguchi both warn against education that seeks to subordinate the will of students to external goals; instead both stress that students must be allowed to use their own understanding to solve problems and develop as people. And thus what is taught to students must not have “arbitrary ends” but must rather help students discover the “worth of things that might be chosen as ends.” According to Kant, the worth of subjects of study must be connected to how one chooses the ends of one’s actions, i.e. upholding the categorical imperative in ethical action. This ‘worth’ ascribed to ethical ends is what Makiguchi calls value—that which is created when one’s action accord with the categorical imperative and works to benefit human life. Value is not just known, like

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14 Bethel, Dayle M. Makiguchi the Value Creator. (New York: Weatherhill, 1973), 32
15 Kant., 25
the truth-value of ethical imperatives is known. Instead value can only be lived, just as the categorical imperative is only justified when one’s free will chooses a given action. Makiguchi argues further that “in order to be able to evaluate our personal values correctly, we need self-awareness and other-awareness working in unison.” Education that is truly egalitarian and value-creative nourishes people who are whole and integrated, empowered with the knowledge of one’s self as a rational being capable of creating value. And this awareness is not achieved “through comparing one’s own qualities to those of others [as in a hypothetical imperative]. Rather, it is the [realization] of the personal value of oneself as a whole engaged in the greater whole of society that matters [as in Kant’s Categorical Imperative and Kingdom of ends].”

Kant’s categorical imperative is predicated on the concept that, because all people are capable of reason, they are all capable of ethical action. Therefore, Makiguchi advocates that the teacher’s role is to help the intelligence of his or her pupil find ways of discovering unique thought. What is most important is that a teacher believes in the capacity of his or her pupil, and that his or her pupil believes in his or her own capacity for free thought and ethical action. Teachers must respect their students as ends unto themselves and remain open to being instructed as well as giving instruction. Student and teacher act in a spirit of reciprocal dialogue where discovery and action transpire as an endless evolving process. True intellectual emancipation comes when teacher and student each share the assumption of equal dignity as rational beings and work together to nourish the capacity of pupils to create their own understanding and use that understanding to support the social good. Together, teachers and students work in a community of equals to create understanding that is new to student and teacher. Shared and new understanding can only be achieved if there is an egalitarian intellectual dialogue between learner and teacher based on the shared belief in the equal value of the understandings of all human intelligence. As Makiguchi asserts, “thinking and learning necessarily include listening to the views and ideas of other persons and relating those views and ideas to our own experience.”

Makiguchi stresses that education is not a transient experience relegated only to the school room; instead all aspects of society foster the educative process. Learning is, by necessity, a life-long process of living in an evolving world. Thus, value-creative education must be aimed at life-long development of one’s ability to make good choices and participate in the social process. Makiguchi drew much of his foundational thought from Kant, and Kant contributed to a wider dialogue about free society and democratic government that raged through Europe at the end of the 18th century. The rest of this paper is focused on a number of well known speeches by Americans who used their prodigious skills of heart and mind to peacefully serve their fellows by standing up against injustice in the two hundred years following the institution of philosophical ideas as political law. Those I will quote in the following pages never advocated war, but instead sought change brought about by common people armed with the universal and undying principles of freedom and equality. Education, like democracy, is a process that lives in each moment. Each generation must shape and re-shape its meaning through a social process. The following will examine how change in society, based on democratic

16 Makiguchi., 86
17 Ibid., 86
18 Ibid., 170
ideals of freedom and equality, has been peacefully effected by the efforts and sacrifices of socially engaged Americans from all ages in this country’s history.

III

Democracy:
Freedom, Equality and the Struggle for Change

In the Declaration of Independence (1776), second United States president Thomas Jefferson sought to integrate into politics the theory of equality of reason in all rational beings in order to stress that governments derive their power horizontally from the consent of the governed; it is not exercised vertically through tyranny. Therefore, he prefaced the declaration with the line:

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.—That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the just consent of the governed.”

What is most intriguing about Jefferson’s statement is that in 1776 these were not ‘self-evident truths’ but were rather very revolutionary ideas. George Washington pointed this out in his first inaugural address when he states that the dream of a free and equal society is “staked on an experiment entrusted to the hands of the American people.” The success of America’s social experiment was mired by the institution of slavery. American slavery presented a deep contradiction, where a whole segment of the population was not viewed as rational beings with unalienable rights [ends] but rather as property to be exploited for the material gain of others [means]. Millions of human beings were held in bondage in a ‘free’ society. This terribly unethical violation of the categorical imperative continued to challenge and drive the evolution of American political life for generations. The events of the next two hundred years would prove the truth of this statement from Jefferson’s inaugural address:

“Sometimes it is said that man can not be trusted with the government of himself. Can he, then, be trusted with the government of others? Or have we found angels in the form of kings to govern him? Let history answer this question”

Indeed history would answer this question, as the Civil War, women’s suffrage, and civil rights movement each tested again and again the commitment of the American people to the ideals to which they ascribe. Early in American life many abolitionists recognized the

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19 The idea that political power is “borrowed” from free people is central to the philosophy of John Locke.
21 Ibid., Washington, first Inaugural., 45
22 Ibid., Jefferson, first Inaugural., 63
contradiction of slavery immediately, stridently calling for the end of slavery in America. William Lloyd Garrison wrote eloquently in *The Liberator* (1831) that the “immediate enfranchisement of our slave population” was the most clear and pressing threat to democracy in America during the early 19th century. And he said that “posterity will bear testimony that I was right.” In time history would indeed prove testimony to the truth of his dire call for abolition, but not until after civil war would rent the union and threaten the very foundation of American democracy as a nation as well as an idea.

The debate over the rights of states and enslaved persons dominated Lincoln’s first bid for office. In his first inaugural address in front of a deeply divided and troubled nation in March 1861, Lincoln saw the civil war gathering like a dark storm on the horizon and called for peace and fellowship “by the better angels of our nature.” But his best efforts were not enough to stem the tide of war, and on April 12, 1861, Confederate troops opened fire on Fort Sumter, thus beginning a bloody four year civil war.

By 1862 the Lincoln perceived that the end of slavery had become the primary ideological outcome of the war and issued the Emancipation Proclamation in January first 1863. A few months later, in November 1863, on the fields of Gettysburg, Lincoln said:

> “Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a civil war, testing whether that nation or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure.”

He acknowledged in this speech that the future of democracy itself was staked on the lives of those who died on that battlefield. He called not for further bloodshed, but for peace. And for the conflict to be resolved in such a way that Americans could again stand together and have reconciliation between those who had become so bitterly divided. He implored of his country men and women that: “This nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom--and that government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the face of the earth.” The ensuing months and years would prove the validity of democratic ideals and the ability for a fledgling democracy to evolve to reflect its founding ideals. The Civil War, and the emancipation of black Americans that followed, provided the historical proof which Jefferson foretold generations before.

1865 dawned with the Lincoln’s reelection as president. The war was effectively over by this time following Robert E. Lee’s surrender at Appomattox Courthouse. Over 600,000 Americans had been slaughtered wholesale in fighting brother on brother in the cornfields of the American countryside. Lincoln’s Second Inaugural Address was undercut by this somber and bloody affair. Focusing on the issue of emancipation Lincoln wrote that the fact of slavery in a democratic nation, “constituted a peculiar and powerful

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23 Ibid., William Lloyd Garrison., 70
24 Ibid., 71
25 Ibid., Lincoln, first Inaugural., 88
26 Ibid., Grafton (Editor)., 80
27 Ibid., 89
28 Ibid., Lincoln, Gettysburg Address., 93
29 Ibid., 93
30 Ibid., Grafton (editor)., 89
interest. And all knew that this interest was somehow the cause of the war."  

Lincoln did not forget the many other social, political, and economic issues that started the war. But instead of focusing on petty infighting he was attempting to show that emancipation, as an outcome of the war, held the greatest relevance to re-defining American democracy. He identified the Civil War as punishment from God for the institution of slavery and soberly stated:

"Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God will that it continue until all the wealth piled up by the bondsman’s two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn by the sword."  

With this sentiment, Lincoln’s final request of the American people was for there to be “malice toward none, with charity for all…to bind up the nations wounds… [and] achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.”

But Lincoln could never complete the work of healing and reconstructing the ruined nation, just a few months later he was assassinated in cold blood. The shock and pain of the war and Lincoln’s death, however, did not destroy democracy. Instead America endured through its scars, and slowly the ideals of freedom and equality became more a part of the real experience of its citizens. In December 1865 the Thirteenth Amendment secured political emancipation of all slaves. The Fifteenth Amendment, ratified in 1870, extended the right to vote to black men; and in 1920 the Nineteenth Amendment further extended the right to vote to all women.

Though the constitution had been changed to protect the rights of a greater percentage of its citizens, many racist and discriminatory laws existed all over America, especially in the south. But it was obvious that the idea of freedom and equality was slowly beginning to win-out over division and oppression. Over time, history was indeed showing that the hope of the founding fathers to create a “more perfect union” was not a false hope, but was possible in an imperfect but ever-changing world.

The reconstruction years following the Civil War and emancipation were rife with a bitter struggle for racial equality. Segregation, Jim Crow, and other laws oppressed black Americans in violation of the constitution. In response to generations of poverty and injustice a young preacher named Martin Luther King Jr. led a peaceful social movement of ordinary black citizens across the south, beginning with the Montgomery Buss Boycott in 1956. He advocated peaceful social change, not bloody armed revolution, and stressed that true freedom could only come from acting in a way that is just, ethical, and respectful of the ideal that freedom must be demanded by all, but not at the cost of the lives or freedoms of others.

The efforts of King and his followers were not in vain and following the election of John F. Kennedy in 1961, the Twenty-third Amendment was passed, forbidding any citizen of any state to be denied the right to vote because of failure to pay poll tax,
effectively outlawing Jim Crow election laws.\textsuperscript{36} During his Inaugural Address, JFK called for unity and peace toward creating a new future for an America then divided by racial and political strife and oppressed by the menace of nuclear war:

"Now the trumpet summons us again—not as a call to bear arms, though arms we need; not as a call to battle, though embattled we are—but a call to bear the burden of a long twilight struggle, year in and year out, 'rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation,' a struggle against the common enemies of man: tyranny, poverty, disease, and war itself."\textsuperscript{37}

Two years later in August 1963 Martin Luther King Jr. led a march on Washington and stood at the feet of Lincoln, the great emancipator, proud of the fortitude and courage of the great multitude of the ordinary citizens gathered before him. He declared that the struggle for equal rights was not over and must continue peacefully for as long as injustice exists. His "I Have a Dream" speech redefined the social movements of the coming decades, and became the rallying call for all people who wished "not to be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character."\textsuperscript{38} He called for faith in freedom to "hew out the mountain of despair a stone of hope." and to transform "the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood."\textsuperscript{39} Just three months later, JFK was assassinated in Dallas. And five years later, in 1968, Martin Luther King Jr. was also assassinated. Despite these tragic and violent events, the generations of Americans who followed have largely employed the peaceful methods of civil disobedience and civic engagement purported by Dr. King and JFK to effect social change. All of these leaders and champions of freedom believed that the universal ideals found in Kant’s work must be instituted as a tangible reality for the sake of all. They each worked, suffered, and died for the sake of the happiness of ordinary people. We are infinitely indebted to them.

Makiguchi looked around and saw Japanese society use education to consume the flesh of human life in a fascist and senseless war. In the end he was jailed for his views on education and democracy, and died in a six tatami mat cell in Sugamo, Tokyo on November 18, 1944.\textsuperscript{40} Abraham Lincoln, struggled to the presidency and carried the fate of democracy on his shoulders, a burden he bore with grace, and when the nation needed him most to help suture the wounds of war, he was shot in cold blood in 1865.\textsuperscript{41} John F. Kennedy, who died like Makiguchi on a November day, presided over a time when democracy was again being tested by the fires of civil and social unrest. Yet, in this America, one hundred years after Lincoln, the struggle of the oppressed black minority was not fought with arms, but with ideas. Americans demanded that their government afford them the rights and respect due to all rational beings by earning their rights peacefully, in the true spirit of democratic temperance. The leader of those men and women was Dr. King, who called for a new era of democracy and dreamt of a future

\textsuperscript{36} Grafton., 32
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., Kennedy, Inaugural., 219
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., Dr. King, March on Washington address
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., 243
\textsuperscript{40} Bethel., 28
\textsuperscript{41} Grafton., 92
when freedom, equality, and justice will be afforded to all people in America and the world. His call for peaceful revolution was met again with reckless hate, and he too was killed for doing his duty as a human being. The fight for peace and equality is an endless evolving process, the choice to do what is right and work for the benefit of all takes unshakeable courage.

Now we stand again at a crossroads of American history. Our society faces challenges of poverty, war, disease, and political injustice in American and abroad. The dark face of war touches every continent, while the insidious effects of environmental degradation continue to endanger every human alive. A new economic depression has thrown our market system into chaos, shaking the foundation of our modern world. Though these challenges are great, there are many young people, well educated and socially engaged, standing up and using their freedom of thought to live their lives for the sake of creating social values. Makiguchi believed whole-heartedly that education was inexorably linked to social development and harmony. As people are educated to actualize their individual potential by working for the greater good, a just and equitable society can be established in nations and around the world. This hope continues to be actualized every day when new efforts are made to further the evolution of a truly democratic society.

Forty years after Martin Luther King’s assassination, our country has elected a young man of mixed race its president; a man whose father could not eat at the same counter as other whites not 60 years ago; and a century before might have been a slave living in bondage without education or the hope of freedom. He is a man who reflects a new generation and a more hopeful era in American life. He shows that a regular middle-class person can achieve the highest office in the land if he or she is dedicated to achieving an excellent education, and uses that education to serve the people. President Obama used his personal talents of heart and mind in the way that every value-creative citizen should, to serve his neighbors as a community organizer in the ghettos of Chicago and as a dedicated public servant in Washington D.C. Regardless of whether one agrees with his political ideology or not, President Obama is living proof of the evolution of democracy as not simply a declaration of ideals, but as a living truth. His election has shown the powerful ideas of peace, hope, change, freedom, and equality which Lincoln, JFK, MLK and countless other ordinary people held so dear, still have the power to peacefully transform the political landscape of an entire people. And, ultimately proves the validity of the “American experiment”—that government of the people, by the people, and for the people has indeed not yet vanished from this earth.
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Youthful Leaders of Schools: An Annotated Bibliography

Monte J. Joffe, Ed. D.

Can a young college graduate run a school—even create one if necessary—to make a lasting impact on the lives of children? Today this might appear to be a rare possibility but in actuality there is a well-worn path of historical precedent.

Of course many children have read *The Little Town on the Prairie* (1971), the story of Laura Ingalls Wilder who became the teacher of a one-room schoolhouse when she was just a teenager. This fictional account was not so atypical, however. *The Thread That Runs So True* by Kentucky poet laureate Jesse Stuart (1958) tells his story of serving as a one-room schoolhouse teacher in rural Appalachia right after his high school graduation. Stuart struggled with the poverty and low social expectations that were deeply inured in the lives of his students. Through sheer determination and creativity he found ways to touch their lives and lead them to many academic accomplishments. For example, in order to convince parents of the value of schooling, he and his students, as part of their studies, had to solve real problems that affected families and the community. Within a handful of years Stewart quickly advanced to the level of principal and then superintendent. Despite his youth, once in these positions, he fought gallantly against entrenched traditions, sometimes at the risk of his physical safety. For Stewart “the schoolroom was the gateway to all the problems of humanity. It was the gateway to the correcting of evils” (p. 82). To be sure, such schools had their equivalents in other countries; Tsunesaburo Makiguchi was an acknowledged leader in the one-room schoolhouse movement of Hokkaido, Japan.

John McPhee (1966) recounts the story of Frank L. Boyden who in 1902, at the age of 22, became the headmaster of Deerfield Academy in Massachusetts. Deerfield was at that time a small rural high school that had fallen onto very hard times and had only 14 students. Boyden, just graduated from college and seeking temporary work before starting law school, remained the headmaster for sixty-six years, transforming Deerfield into a preeminent boarding school. “The object of the school should be the development of character, to help each pupil to do that for which he is best suited,” he wrote in 1906. With his hands-on student-oriented approach he transformed that vision into a highly acknowledged tradition. Basing the school on deep personal relationships with students and staff rather than sets of rules, he played on as well as coached sports teams, visited classes and dorms daily, and was renowned for never giving up on a student. In fact, over
the course of his 66 year tenure as headmaster only five students were ever asked to leave the school!

A. S. Neill opened the famed Summerhill School in 1921 when he was 38 years old. Summerhill was one of the first “free” schools that advocate a fully democratic approach to education including town hall meetings where students as well as staff have equal votes to decide school policies. Summerhill pioneered the organizing principle of non-compulsory classes. The experience of Summerhill provides strong anecdotal evidence that self-motivation, self-discipline, and critical thinking can be engendered in non-coercive educational environments that emphasize individual freedom and community. The school has continued to thrive true to its principles despite numerous swings in prevailing educational philosophies in the UK.

Inspired by Summerhill, many young American educators opened up free schools in the 1960s and 1970s. Miller (2002) describes the history of this free school movement, based largely on an examination of source materials such as school brochures and newsletters. Although many of the schools were ephemeral in their lifespan, several have had distinguished uninterrupted histories. In 1968 Daniel Greenberg (1995) started the Sudbury Valley School when he was 34 years old and this school remains an inspiration for the free school movement.

John Dewey opened his Laboratory School at the University of Chicago in 1896 when he was a young professor of 34. Dewey's intentions were clear and well-articulated: he hoped to construct an educational infrastructure--composed of philosophy, curriculum, pedagogy, and administration--that could provide a foundation for American education into the future. In this process he was determined to merge theory and practice in full view of the American public in order to usher forth schools that could enrich American democracy. His legacy of work on education (1916, 1938, and 1956) can all be traced to the Laboratory School. Laurel N. Tanner's account of Dewey and his school (1997) provides glimpses into his emerging theories, his attempts to test and further expand his conceptions in the crucible of the school, and his own dedication to “construct the school as a social institution, having social life and value within itself” (1897). Tanner toggles between Dewey's work and comments on the state of American education today and her charge is clear: we need to revisit Dewey's work in order to establish a school reform agenda that is meaningful and sustainable.

This is the task of today's young educators. Brown and Moffett (1999) apply Campbell’s metaphor of the monomyth, the hero’s journey, to the work of educators who blaze promising hope-filled paths through the confusion and despair of the contemporary educational landscape. Many young educators will certainly take up the challenge and create exciting new educational opportunities for our children.
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Autonomous, Self-regulated, Self-discovered Learning

Tana Gandhi

Recent conversations with young children have left me hopeful, sometimes appalled, and most of the time confident in the need for a change in current educational structures. I asked a seven year old girl once what she would like to do in the future and without hesitation, she replied “an anesthesiologist!” I reply, “A what? What do they do?” and she responds, “They put people to sleep, that’s all!” An eight year old boy, packed with a busy schedule from school to swimming practice to homework to perhaps another activity asks me why I chose not to go to one of the big universities. With conviction, he declares distinctively, “one of those universities is the #1 private school in California! They have the best sports team ever! And the best programs!” I’m thinking, this boy has planned out his entire life at the age of eight. Sure, there’s nothing wrong with that, but I question: where did the time go when free time and exploring were the only plans we made as children. When did play time and adventure get substituted for a rigorous schedule? And lastly, I become curious and wary of the structures of learning being implemented across the country.

I turn to Carl Rogers to understand this lingering issue. He states, “I have come to feel that the only learning which significantly influences behavior is self-discovered, self-appropriated learning.” Rogers believes that the “aim of education” should be the “facilitation of learning (304)”, through which the real importance of this process is not to rely on static knowledge but to gain adequate skills necessary to adapt to a constantly changing world. And by adhering to this objective, his theory of learning as a self-discovering process applies and is quite literally implemented into free schools, some of these being Summerhill, Sudbury Valley, the Albany Free School, and Playmountain Place nearby in Los Angeles. All four schools stress the significance of self-regulation, a learning process where a child chooses for him or herself the subject matter to learn, to reflect, and to find happiness within it. With this key principle of self-regulation in mind, Aaditto Shen is in the process of building such a free school in West Bengal, India called the Ananda Circle. The establishment of such free schools has been a response to the traditional education structure, thus, this paper points out the current issues of public schools and influences on childhood that call out for such changes.

Public school education, which Paulo Freire refers to as “banking education,” Neil Postman as “consumer utility,” and Makiguchi as “force feeding,” is seen as a system in which teachers teach a static material to the students and these same students are forced to regurgitate these materials and facts onto paper through the forms of exams.
and standardized tests. These “necessary” yet daunting examinations quite literally strain the creativity and imagination out of the students, thus leading to the systematic domestication of the student’s childhood (Mercogliano xii). In relation, A.S. Neill writes in *Summerhill: A Radical Approach to Child Rearing*:

“Creators learn what they want to learn in order to have the tools that their originality and genius demand. We do not know how much creation is killed in the classroom with its emphasis on learning. (26)”

Furthermore, Neill argues that the public school has an “absurd curriculum” which forces a potential dressmaker to learn quadratic equations. This type of coercion becomes the first step in creating a sense of fear inside the student. This fear, whether growing into resentment or subordination, creates hostility, therefore, hindering the chances of ever endeavoring, thinking, and feeling authentically. Similarly, Mercogliano writes *In Defense of Childhood: Protecting Kids’ Inner Wildness* to argue that it is not only the public school system that domesticates the child; it is also the parents who do not nurture, or over-nurture their children. He believes that the parents are equally responsible for this domestication. The steady increase of controlling parents who decide their child’s hourly schedule, morning and evening activities, leaves the child empty for his or her alone and free time. Mercogliano argues that these children subordinate themselves and lose their sense of autonomy when they do not have enough free time to choose their own activities. In the long run, he also warns that children who do not have the opportunities to decide for themselves are left inadequate for the real world (16). In addition, when the parents decide every hour of their child’s schedule, they are quite frankly robbing the child of his or her time for self-discovery. Growing concerns of the effectiveness of parental control and rigid school systems all lead to the demand for an alternative method.

Such theories propose that learning should be a natural process regulated at the pace of the student. In particular, it does not aim for students to perform well on tests, but rather the happiness of the students through the process of learning. This process is deeply embedded into the framework of a free school, a no curriculum, non-hierarchical, autonomic school that heavily believes in the democratic process of self regulation. In this educational structure, students decide the school rules, the curriculum, and the subjects collectively. With a heavy emphasis on the autonomy of the students, the teachers are the facilitators who only offer aid when the student has exhausted all attempts in resolving, and/or solving a certain issue. When a student finds an answer free of supervision, when the student establishes his or her personal interest without outside influence, this student has tools to create a sense of self, and most importantly, to hold a sense of autonomy (*Free to Learn)*.

Maria Montessori declared that “all children are born with an instinctive need to become autonomous individuals,” and that “they should be encouraged to be self-directed as soon as possible. (Mercogliano 41)” In this case, the process of self-direction begins right in the school, as well as an intrinsic, inherent, natural growth of autonomy within all students.

The central theme of self-regulation recurs in the objectives of all four successful free schools as aforementioned. Not only have these schools put into practice the theories of alternative education, they are successful in implementing the objectives and adhering to their mission. In Summerhill, the way the school sticks to its objectives is through self-government. Neill writes, “Everything connected with social, or group, life, including
punishment for social offenses, is settled by vote at the Saturday night General School Meeting. (45)” He continues to describe these School Meetings as a participation of all students and teachers in their decision making process on a certain issue. He discusses rules varying from bedtime, lifeguard presence in the beach, and bullying. He also mentions that the students are “empirically practical”, and by so, any talk of theory will not be discussed in great depth (51). He then redefines these meetings to be more of a social feature and outlet for the community. Simply stated, the Sudbury Valley Press (SVP) defines this community as,

“…each student [of] the school is a full voting member of the body that manages the school, the body that makes policy for the school, and the body that works to deal with disciplinary problems in a way that is fair and open. (SVP 6)”

Furthermore, this openness between adults and students, “promotes an extraordinary flowering of self-motivation, initiative, creativity, and leadership. (SVP 7)” The Albany Free School also uses council meetings to resolve any issues within the community. Free to Learn, a short film documenting the framework of this school, displays a few council meetings in which the students and teachers collectively resolve an issue, reach a decision, and vote unanimously for or against a particular matter. A student calls a council meeting when all other attempts to resolve this matter are exhausted. In such a case, all the students, teachers, and staff are required to go to the “big room” to delegate a particular problem, in most cases, between students. Along with self-regulation all four free schools express a deep emphasis in establishing trust with the students for these types of council meetings to function for its purpose. Aside from these meetings, a mutual trust between the teacher and the students creates a personal bond along with an open environment for the student to truly be themselves, free of any inhibitions.

With these key principles in mind, Ananda Circle proposes to be quite similar, and thus, quite effective in the process. Shen himself wrote that he is heavily influenced by the theories and practices of A.S. Neill, thus the school aims to be a “free, democratic school,” which “intends to approach the education of a child…as a holistic development of the complete person. (Shen). Furthermore, the central objective of this school is to create “Ananda” a Sanskrit word for a “multi-dimensional fulfillment in life” through self-discovery of one’s own identity. I am eager to hear of the progress made to establish this school and have no doubt that Ananda Circle will approach education and learning holistically.

Ultimately, free schools offer a unique experience for students to be able to understand themselves, to help create a sense of self and autonomy, and to be able to address themselves honestly. In these objectives, free schools are extremely relevant as the most effective alternate in protecting the inner-wildness of the child, along with providing a space in which students can express themselves in any manner enhanced through their creativity and imagination. And in comparison to the previous encounters with young students, the one that keeps me the most hopeful is a student-made poster within the walls of a charter school in Long Beach. The teachers asked their students what they would like to be in the future. They were free to write in any language, and the one that stuck with me for the longest time was this “Mi sueño es ser un chocolatier y dar chocolate a las personas pobres.” Translation: “My dream is to be a chocolatier and give chocolate to all the poor people”. Such inspiration led me to believe that self-discovery is by far the most conducive method to creativity and the facilitation of learning.
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Comparative Analysis of
Humanistic Educational Theories and Practices:
Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and Carl Rogers

Sari Nakayama

What is humanistic education? One way of interpreting humanistic education is that it aims at not only the intellectual development of students but also at the formation of their personalities. Daisaku Ikeda, a Japanese humanistic educator, puts well this holistic view of education in his statement: “Education is a process of becoming fully human.” Humanistic educators argue that contemporary public education has been used to maintain the existing social values based on capitalism by imposing high pressure on students to adapt to what is “normal.” In this repressive education, students are not able to afford the time and space to cultivate their latent potentials and emotions, but they are constantly trained to be obedient, motivated, and hard-working. The emergence of humanistic idea in education stems from fierce resistance to this mainstream authoritarian and totalitarian education in the last two centuries. The founder of the value-creating pedagogy, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi (1871-1944) is considered to be one of the pioneers of humanistic education. In 1930, he published the first volume of Education for Creative Living and declared that the purpose of education is to realize students’ happiness. Likewise, a father of humanistic psychology, Carl Rogers (1902-1987) developed a “person-centered” pedagogy which aims at the psychological well-being of each student by facilitating the free expression of emotions and the exploration of self. Though each theorizes differently, both Makiguchi and Rogers agree with the idea that education should not be to preserve elites’ status quo by transferring accepted knowledge from teachers to students, but should instead help individuals actualize their full potentials.

In addition to the “student-centeredness,” humanistic education also rests upon the premise that learning should resonate with the real life of the learner. Makiguchi explains, “Study and actual living are seen as more than parallels; they inform one another inter-contextually, study-in-living and living-in-study (知行合一), throughout one’s whole life” (156). Rogers also concludes, based on his own experience, that only learning that is generated from real life situations is relevant and meaningful. Although both Makiguchi and Rogers share the same insight on what education should be, there are

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differences that become prominently apparent in how to implement their ideals. Makiguchi proposes the half-day school system, believing that the adult’s role in education is to guide the learning process in ways that students achieve the 知行合一 most efficiently. On the other hand, the pedagogical method Rogers uses is often called “non-directive”. Literally, teachers do not direct students’ learning by any fixed curriculum. Through a comparative analysis of the two different methodologies, this paper explores the source of the differences and similarities and attempts to understand its implications for democracy in education.

**On Human Nature**

The difference in educational methodologies between Makiguchi and Rogers stems from their different perspectives on human nature. Makiguchi believes that all humans are endowed with goodness as well as evil nature, and his criterion of the two lies in the relationship between individuals and the environment. Makiguchi understands the good qualities of humanity such as love, empathy, and compassion as man’s strengths because it benefits not only the individual but also the lives of others. As for the evil nature, Makiguchi points out that it is man’s fundamental defect—our ego—that bothers or causes troubles for others. Since he believes that the shortcomings are the indication of man’s un-socialized state, in Makiguchi’s view, it is viable for humans to overcome them through social interactions and learning. Makiguchi states,

people left to their own ends—in their ‘untamed’ natural state, as it were—tend to develop not what society would uphold as strong points but shortcomings it would prefer to strike clean from the slate. We all have shortcomings; hence in our consideration of individuality as a basis for developing educational methodologies, the main focus should be how to reduce errant individuality. Education in this model starts from a normalization of untamed individuality and ultimately achieves the distinction of extra normalization. (165)

On the contrary to this notion, Rogers upholds his strong belief in only humans’ good nature. Rogers states that his first-hand experiences as a psychotherapist has lead him to conclude that “the innermost core of man’s nature, the deepest layers of his personality, the base of his ‘animal nature,’ is positive in nature—is basically socialized, forward-moving, rational and realistic” (91). Instead of considering man’s antisocial characteristics as innate defects which are to be eliminated by socialization, Rogers argues that they are reactions to the “frustration of more basic impulses for love and security and belonging” (91). Rogers sees man’s bad points, if there are any, as consequences of modern society that have gone against the laws of nature. Nonetheless, according to Rogers, humans are fundamentally good.

**The Teachers’ Role and Learning Environment**

These different beliefs in human nature inevitably lead to different instructional methodologies. Makiguchi’s perspective leaves education with the task to socialize
“untamed” humans by promoting their good points while correcting their flaws. Accordingly, he considers teachers as role models who set good examples for students. Makiguchi clearly states, “It is the function of education to guide unconscious living to consciousness, valueless living to value, and irrational living to reason” (90). Whereas Rogers, believing in man’s good nature, maintains that the role of education is to simply provide facilities and support with which students can bring out their strengths. In Rogers’ view, nothing can be taught, and teaching is simply sharing what teachers know about how to learn. Therefore, even though for both Makiguchi and Rogers, the purpose of education is to actualize the happy and good life of students through personal relationships with teachers, the two take different ways of implementing their theory.

Regarding the educational settings for student-centered education, Makiguchi and Rogers also hold different ideas. Makiguchi proposes the half-day school system to encourage a student’s holistic development as a person and “active participation in productive social living” (156). However, this proposal reflects a shard of Makiguchi’s doubt or anxiety toward children’s ability to lead good and valuable lives without guidance. If he had instead placed complete trust in students’ aptitude for value creation, it would have been “a whole-day non-school system.” Yet, Makiguchi keeps some room for structured learning, and in fact, he delivers incisive criticism against “liberal education.” In the framework of that time, liberal education refers to an idea that prioritizes student’s individuality and autonomy. Although Makiguchi is opposed to “the enforced conformity,” for him, the trend of liberalism is not an alternative for bureaucracy, but he believes that overemphasis on individualism produces egocentric persons rather than promoting humanity. With this concern, he repeatedly emphasizes that individuality can be discussed only “within the context of our self-awareness and self-acceptance of membership in the human community” (164).

Rogers, on the other hand, thinks that there is no need to direct student learning. He argues that authentic education is for and by students to explore who they are, and therefore, a free environment that allows pupils to think, feel, reason, and determine independently is necessary. Rogers writes that “if I trust the capacity of the human individual for developing her own potentiality, then I can provide her with many opportunities and permit her to choose her own way and her own direction in her learning” (313). In addition to having conviction in students’ potential, educators must also be able to generously accept a student as a whole person without judging or imposing teachers’ own perceptions. Rogers believes that when fully trusted and accepted, students develop to become more independent and responsible individuals. Thus, Rogers comes to advocate the method of freedom.

Freedom to Learn

The question is: What kind of liberal education is Makiguchi criticizing? How would Makiguchi understand Rogers’ “non-directive” methodology? In order to grasp the method of freedom, I take an exemplary model of Rogers’ “freedom to learn” and examine its theory and practice through qualitative research. I have conducted naturalistic observation at one humanistic educational institution called Play Mountain Place (PMP), which was founded in 1949 based on Rogers’ and A.S. Neil’s pedagogies. This free school is located in Los Angeles, and for the duration of about three weeks, I stayed
inside the school throughout the course of a day to observe the dynamics of teachers and students, particularly focusing on their shared discourses, practices and learning experiences.

Known as “the Summerhill of the West,” PMP has its own curriculum that is “organic, child-initiated, and primarily experiential.” The students have freedom in terms of deciding what they want to do for the day, when and how. There is no such thing as classes or exams; instead, the students and teachers spontaneously work on their own “plans.” The students’ participation is never demanded, but their will is always respected. Everyone in the school has equal rights, regardless of his or her position as a teacher, a student, or a staff. Like A.S. Neil explains, “Each individual is free to do what he likes as long as he is not trespassing on the freedom of others” (155). The people at PMP not only have the freedom to choose, but are also ensured the freedom to be themselves. Honest expression of their feelings are encouraged based on the belief that “repression of feelings only leads to greater problems later, which further complicate the child's education and interpersonal relationships” (PMP website).

Apparently, Makiguchi does not agree with this method of freedom. He states, “Except for exceptional cases in which learners manage to set up their own programs or routines to bring value to, or rather from, the reality they experience, they must be guided” (89). The essence of Soka pedagogy lies in this guidance of value-creation. In this sense, for Makiguchi, what is most important in education is not to provide an environment wherein students are literally free from restrictions but rather to empower them to create the inner freedom in whatever their situations. This is perhaps why Makiguchi and Ikeda emphasize that teachers are the foremost element of the educational environment.

Before I started my research at PMP, my mind was occupied with mixed feelings of excitement, concern, curiosity, anxiety, and doubt, just like Makiguchi would have had been. I could not help being suspicious that, given that freedom, the students at PMP would grow to be spoiled and egocentric persons. However, my interactions and close observations of PMP students have completely liberated me from the prejudice. From the very beginning of the day, I felt the people’s warm love and found myself comfortable in the cozy environment. They all welcomed me and the children were, in fact, very polite and respectful to even strangers like myself. From every interaction between the teachers and students, I saw how teachers and parents placed full trust in children’s capacities and judgments. They never treated students like little helpless ones. The teachers truly respect students’ plans and ideas and provide support when needed. The teachers at PMP rarely give students guidance; they play a role as facilitators for conflict resolutions between the students. Every PMP member understands that one cannot insist his or her freedom when it exceeds others’ limits. Through expressing their own limitations and negotiating with others, PMP students acquire a sense of whom they are and learn how to work out problems with others. Although my research has not yet completed, it is already clear to me that Play Mountain Place is not just a playing place without order and discipline. In fact, there are limits and rules; but, these regulations are created by the people, not imposed from external authority. In sum, PMP is a learning community where all the individuals fairly participate in a process of becoming humans.
Individual Happiness and Social Consciousness

Makiguchi consistently emphasizes that people need to raise their social consciousness through education because individual happiness cannot be achieved when he or she neglects the well-being of a whole society. He concludes that “the purpose of education is to enable children to become responsible, healthy cells in the social organism, to contribute to the happiness of the society, and by doing so, to find meaning, purpose, and happiness in their own individual lives” (21-22). In other words, true happiness of individuals can be achieved only through a process of dedicating other persons and larger communities. On the contrary, such psychiatrists as Rogers and Neil believe that individuals’ well-being is the very first thing to be ensured if we seek societal well-being. With this belief, they came to conclude that it is necessary for individuals to fully experience and to be accepted as who they are. From a psychological perspective, when the defensiveness is removed, a person will naturally “participate in the vastly complex self-regulatory activities of his organism—the psychological as well as physiological thermostatic controls—in such a fashion as to live in increasing harmony with himself and with others” (Rogers 195). Thus, Makiguchi and Rogers take different means to meet the shared end—that is, the students’ happiness, and the difference in approaches seemingly stems from their different ideas on human nature as described before.

Implications for Democracy in Education

This comparative analysis of the two different methodologies for humanistic education has led me to grapple with the idea of democracy in education. To a greater or lesser extent, John Dewey’s idea of democracy and belief in education as a means of social reform had impact on both Makiguchi’s value-creating pedagogy and the free school movement in the United States. Other than their different understandings of human nature, another explanation for the difference in their pedagogical methodologies would be that one tries to improve the authoritarian educational system from within, whereas the other seeks the reformation outside of the stagnant system. Indeed, social democrats were not happy with the free school movement in the 1960s because they believed that education for democracy should be achieved by and for all people and that free schools and other alternative schools are like a niche that would serve only the privileged. In fact, the advocates of free schools gave up upon public education, seeing it as “more of an obstacle to participatory democracy than an essential vehicle for it” (Miller 165).

However, Ron Miller also argues that the radicals “wanted their school to serve more as exemplary models than as detached islands. They hope to demonstrate that participatory democracy could work in face-to-face community settings and they invited American society to follow their example” (168). Play Mountain Place has been able to live up to this hope for more than fifty years, and through my research, I was able to witness the healthy growths in PMP students, which confirm the value of Rogers’ and Neil’s philosophy. Although the PMP community has successfully carried out the ideals of participatory democracy, it is also true that this opportunity is not open to anybody. Unfortunately, since it is an independent educational institution, it is incapable of receiving governmental funding, and therefore, its school management depends on tuition from parents and donations. There is no such thing as free-lunch or school buses. In order
to have the choice to go to Play Mountain, the child needs financial support from his family, which not everybody can afford. Therefore, it becomes crucial to critically examine how we can change public educational systems for the better by applying what we learn from PMP’s democratic praxis.

Cultural Historical Account

Regardless of all the similarities in theories, it is important to keep in mind that Makiguchi and Rogers lived in different times and places. In addition to the different beliefs in human nature, there may be other reasons that led the two to come up with different approaches. Thinking of the Japanese society in those days, I wonder whether establishing a school run by local community members was even a choice for Makiguchi. Even today, the people in Japan do not have as many school choices as Americans (i.e. charter schools, magnet schools, school voucher system, and home schooling). Hence, in order for us to fully grasp where Makiguchi stands in terms of educational methodologies, the analysis of his thoughts in the context of Japanese history and culture is necessary for future research. Nevertheless, we must not forget that there is not an ideal method for Soka Education. Although Makiguchi proposes the half-day school system as one way of reforming public education, he is not giving specific instructions for teachers on how to teach value-creation. Rather, he leads a discussion on the attitudes of humanistic educators. The essence of Soka education then lies in our continuous seeking of how we can go about realizing one’s unfulfilled potentials to achieve individual happiness as well as societal well-being.
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The Fetishism of Democracy and Soka Education

David Witkowski

Introduction

Following the results of last November’s Presidential Election, many Americans reacted as though Barack Obama would singlehandedly put an end to all misery undergone by Americans in the last eight years, including every problem persisting in America today. However much the American and global public may hold the new president in high esteem, how can we be sure that this is not merely a love affair with the idea of a youthful, energetic, African American political leaders as the U.S. President? How can we be sure that this is not analogous to the beginning of a teen relationship where two young people fall radically in love with the idea of being in love, and call one another every night? Do I personally disapprove with placing great hopes in President Obama? No. However, I do agree with Lauren Berlant’s caution to us all when she states, “political happiness will lead to a flatlined complacent brain, diminished political judgment, and the revelation of your bad taste.”1 Berlant is worried that immediate political satisfaction will cause us to ignore our personal responsibilities as citizens, and regard Barak, or freedom, or democracy as the cure to our problems.

In our post-modern, post-structural, post-colonial, post-capitalist, post-you-name-it world, what can we accurately concentrate our hopes on without experiencing the utter pain of dissatisfaction? What about money? Although we may put our hopes in making money, if any of us have followed 2% of mainstream media in the last six months, the words hope and money probably should not be associated with one another. Ok, what else is there? Well, anyone who received a western education, or education imported from the West, may answer democracy. Although democracy may represent the system of government most conducive to granting popular freedoms and allowing for widespread representation, what does this beloved notion refer to in reality? Although its point of reference has been clouded by history, the term democracy, nor any other term, is utterly bereft of signification. However, this signification is attributed to the idea by the subject, that is, we provide the term democracy with meaning.

We, as ideological subjects, produce signification and imbue a given ideology with the power to act and orient this action. Therefore, the product of our subjective labor determines the very direction of society. Moreover, education lies at the base of our

1 “Political Happiness—Or Cruel Optimism?” http://supervalentthought.wordpress.com/2008/11/09/political-happiness-or-cruel-optimism/
subjectivity. Depending on the education that one receives, in the home, in the school, or in the workplace, what one contributes to society is also determined.

Fetishism is described as the degree to which a particular thing or idea of a thing holds sway over the individual’s approach to life. Fetishism, a pivotal concept in Marx’s later writings, has consumed post-Marxist thinkers throughout the 20th century, considering this the process that engenders the emergence of ideology and the alienation of the subject. Observing the problem of what Berlant terms “political happiness” or Marx’s “The Fetishism of the Commodity”, we witness “The Fetishism of Democracy” arising in educational structures that depreciate the power of the individual to produce and influence society.

In this paper I will argue that only through pedagogy that inflates the students’ breadth of character and deepens the depth and profundity of his or her experiences will a true democracy be accomplished, whether on the level of the state, family, religious group, or other social institution that we may belong to. However, one of our major challenges to building an actively enlightened society is the human tendency to fetishize what Marx terms the commodity, and what I will extend to any external character. In his epic dialogue with Dr. Arnold Toynbee, the founder of this university, Daisaku Ikeda, shares his fear that education has become a tool manipulating the individual to conform to an ideological agenda when he states,

First, by making learning a tool of politics and economics, it has robbed learning of its inherent dignity and independence. Second, people engaged in learning and education become the slaves of intellectual knowledge and technological skill, which are the only aspects of learning prized today. As an outcome of this trend, respect for humanity declines. In short, today people are compelled to serve intellectual knowledge and technological skill, which are in turn controlled by politics and economics.2

Ikeda responds to his own fears of placing too much value on intellectual prowess for advancing an ideological agenda when he states,

Once a child has grown and has entered society, his ability to do academic study will not be the basis on which his character is judged. In many cases, breadth of character and depth of experience will play the determining part in people’s evaluations of him…we must devise ways of bringing students in contact with society and providing them with varied experiences as often as possible through extracurricular activities and community life. I believe that the kind of education system needed today is one that concentrates on developing the whole human being.3

In this paper, I will focus on identifying character fetishization and the mode of education necessary to liberate ourselves from its grip.

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2 “Choose Life”, Arnold Toynbee and Daisaku Ikeda, p. 65.
3 Ibid, p. 66.
Marx’s Warning

Many of us have experienced the feeling of wanting an item, person, piece of knowledge, and so forth, because we are under the impression that it will make us happy or solve a problem. To use myself as an example, I thought that I was in for an easy, low-stress, and fun job as a preschool teacher in Japan—false. I then thought that once I got to graduate school I would cherish each day of studying rigorously following two years of working—again, false. Unfortunately, most people in the world live life putting all of their hopes in an external and personified character, be it a job, graduate school, clothes, position of authority, or a political ideology such as democracy. The problem is not with democracy, nor is it the clothes, nor the job. The problem arises when we, often unknowingly, fetishize a fantastic reality where once we achieve the object of our desire, our life is transformed into one of ease and serenity. However, even when we achieve the object, we are in no way satisfied with the feeling that it causes in us, and embark on the cycle of fetishism again.

In Volume 1 of “The Capital”, Karl Marx posits the theory, “The Fetishism of the Commodity”, where he states that the products of our labor have gained control over individuals who have become subject to all of its vicissitudes. Say, for example, I build a car. This car has a particular use-value. I can use it to take myself places quickly and comfortably without waiting for a bus or train... Then, I decide that I really do not use the car that much and need some extra money, and consequently sell the car. At what price? $2,000? $10,000? $100? In setting a price, we have to estimate not a use-value, but an exchange-value. What can I exchange my car for? The exchange-value depends on a number of factors, such as the time in history, the part of the world I am in, the value held by the buyer, etc. In this situation, we have moved from the realm of use-value to exchange-value—a realm of abstraction to the point of unintelligibility. Once these commodities use an abstract value in relation to other commodities—completely distinct from physical properties—they assume a character to be desired by us: the consumers. Not only do the consumers desire a commodity character, but he or she will build a life around attaining it or protecting it from having it taken away.

As a consequence of commodity fetishism, the individual abstracts his or her happiness or sense of fulfillment in life to the value of the commodity, turning oneself into the commodity’s slave. Marx states,

> These quantities vary continually, independently of the will, foresight and action of the producers. To them, their own social action takes the form of the action of objects, which rule the producers instead of being ruled by them.4

Marx suggests that we abstract the commodity to the point of its very personification, as though the commodity is another person controlling our desires and actions. I wonder if anyone in this room talks to certain animals, products, or words on a page, expressing your feelings as you would to another person. However, the value of the commodity fluctuates as the social level of mass production and consumption is out of our control as individuals. Therefore, placing ultimate hope in a commodity, be it a professor, class, or

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4 “Capital, vol. 1”, Karl Marx, p. 86.
relationship to make ourselves happy results in a life of the utmost instability, dissatisfaction, and misery.

No different from any other commodity, democracy as a system has been seen as a cure to social, political, and economic ills. Even more dangerous than most commodities, people have exchanged their very lives for the preservation and/or advancement of ideological systems, making the stakes much higher compared with a commodity such as a pair of shoes. Following World War II, for example, Americans were willing to defend democracy even if it meant going to nuclear war with the Soviet Union, and vice versa. Again, following several attacks in the U.S. on September 11th, 2001, over 90% of Americans supported violent means to destroying terrorist groups and supposed states that supported those groups. As a result, many American young people sacrificed their lives for this ambiguous cause. For years, spokespeople for the Bush Administration described our “nation-building” project in Iraq and Afghanistan as the implementation of democracy, but no matter how many times the word “democracy” was fed to the global community, only more confusion, hate, violence and marginalization ensued. Why? Democracy was turned into a commodity to be marketed and fetishized, rather than into a model of governance by the people.

In his book compiling observations on the newfound democracy of the United States of America, French political philosopher, Alexis de Tocqueville writes that in American Democracy, power was not sought in institutions or the state, but only within the individual. Tocqueville’s statement may apply to the perfect application of democratic principles, which are self-reliance and responsibility for one’s community and country at large. In other words, democracy must be practiced on an individual level before it can have any significance other than coercion at a structural level. In his novel, “The Human Revolution”, Daisaku Ikeda depicts his mentor, Josei Toda, discussing the new political phenomenon of democracy in post World War II Japan, saying,

> Individual self-awakening, human rebirth and human revolution would then follow, giving rise to a flowering of education, politics, science, culture and every other human activity. This was the true democracy people have dreamed of.

During post-war Japan, the Japanese people were desperately seeking a system of beliefs that would alleviate their deep suffering. As a result, many thought that democracy came as the answer to their prayers. Although democracy certainly increased the quality of life for the Japanese people, Toda reiterates that whether the individual takes responsibility for his or her life, family, and community, or not, will decide whether its ideals will be realized, or not.

In the next section, we will discuss educational methods that empower the individual to become self-reliant and responsible, laughing in the face of all who tell him, “you will be happy only if…”

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5 “Democracy In America”, Alexis de Tocqueville, p. 53.
The ideal goal of education should be to cultivate broad minded, experienced, self-reliant, and compassionate individuals. Ikeda asserts that pupils must interact with the world, learning through experiences rather than solely by memorizing a set of abstract principles or formulas in preparation for an exam. Although Rousseau’s formulation differs from the Soka model on a methodological level, his character, Jean-Jacques, who is Emile’s teacher, devises ways to give his student pure experiences prior to teaching him the theory describing the particular phenomenon that he experiences. Through this method, Emile learns about the world through his own interaction with various phenomena, supposedly unimpeded by social pressure or prejudice. Naturally, Emile is capable of making judgments about the world and decisions for his life based on the circumstances before him, without being told what to do, or following an abstract moral principle. If Emile were a citizen in the Athenian Democracy voting for or against Socrates’ guilt, he would most likely have voted against based on his personal experience with the man, not seeing the value in assimilating to social pressures or norms.

Rousseau’s educational methodology differs from that of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, the father of Soka Education, as is seen when Jean-Jacques prohibits Emile from engaging in social interaction until he is about 12 years old, whereas Makiguchi encourages social interaction as an integral component to Soka Education. Jean-Jacques prohibits Emile to have social interaction as he believes that it will poison the purity of Emile’s experiences. However, because we could comment that Jean-Jacques serves as an interlocutor between Emile and his environment, his experiences are tainted by the interpretation and influence of Jean-Jacques. Instead, Makiguchi proposed that children should apply their knowledge to real life situations which bear consequences heavier than a score on an exam. Makiguchi writes,

To sum up the fundamental ideal of the half-day school system, study is not seen as a preparation for living, but rather study takes place while living, and living takes place in the midst of study. Study and actual living are seen as more than parallels; they inform one another intercontextually, study-in-living and living-in-study, throughout one’s life.

Under Jean-Jacques’s guidance that Emile isolate himself from society until the age of reason, Rousseau appears to be glued to the notion Makiguchi challenges: that education is a preparation for living. In Soka Education, however, life and education are inseparable.

During my two years in Japan as a preschool teacher at a school called Microcosmos International Preschool and Kindergarten, I had undertaken, with two other like-minded teachers, the task of applying Soka Education in working with two- to six-year-old children. After almost one year of work, we arranged our curriculum to provide our kids with experiences in society by taking them on a 15-minute walk to the park everyday. When tackling our daily theme or concept, we provided the kids with a means for them to apply the given idea to their play, be it through art, pretend play, blocks, salt/sand/water play, books, etc. We learned to direct the child’s day with activities to

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7 “Emile”, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, p. 47.
8 “Education for Value Creative Living”, Makiguchi, p. 156.
develop confidence and joy in his or her own unique way, which consequently encouraged reliance upon themselves, rather than someone else to do things for them.

**Conclusion**

I am sure that many of us would agree that challenging students with experiences and real life problems are an integral component to the practice of Soka Education, falling in line with Makiguchi’s phrase “study-in-living and living-in-study”. However, students and teachers alike, insofar as they are human, tend to choose challenges that they are comfortable with, that is things they think they can do, and avoid challenges that they are not comfortable with, that is things they think they cannot do, hindering the growth of the full human being. The 19th century German philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche writes,

> To the present day, however, all the world continues to believe in miraculous education: for the greatest disorder, confusion of objectives, unfavorable circumstances have succeeded in producing the most fruitful and capable men, and how could there not be something uncanny in that?”

Without challenging not only pupils, but our friends, family members, and most importantly, ourselves, in ways that we may be normally averse to we will fail to raise what Nietzsche writes, “the most fruitful and capable men.” Moreover, through the achievement of a task that we assume as impossible to be achieved by ourselves, pupils, or others in our environment, we sense incredible joy and empowerment. This joy in achieving what seemed impossible is juxtaposed with the misery, or disappointment experienced when achieving what we already know we can do.

In a recent talk given at The University of Chicago entitled, “After the Good Life: an Impasse”, Lauren Berlant conveyed that once we have achieved the object of desire that capitalist ideology has imposed on us, that is, receiving a job with a wage that allows us to consume, buy a house, and raise a family, we hit a blockage, a dead end that the social voice of ideology had not previously warned us about. The signification that we built our whole existence around, the fetishized fantasy renders the subject, well—sad.

Without the proper pedagogy that places individual growth not only as a means, but as an end in itself, history will precariously progress as a mass of individuals searching for the fetishized object. Whether this object is freedom, money, happiness, or a family of one’s own, does not make a difference, insofar as they remain as fetishes always slightly beyond our reach we will remain bound to them like financial analysts bound to the screen displaying the rising and falling figures of the market. Our founder, Daisaku Ikeda states,

> None are lonelier or unhappier than those who do not know the pure joy of creating a life for themselves. To be human is not merely to stand erect

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9 “Human, All Too Human”, Friedrich Nietzsche, p. 115
and manifest reason and intellect: to be human in the full sense of the word is to lead a creative life.\textsuperscript{11}

The struggle of education can be summed up in the mutual struggle of the teacher and pupil to create new meaning that provides fresh value to their lives. However, the robotic digestion of concepts renders those concepts abstract and valueless to their lives. Ikeda states,

\begin{quote}
As you challenge adversity and polish the jewel that is life, you will learn to walk the supreme pathway of true humanity. Whoever leads a creative life from the present into the future will stand in the vanguard of history. I think of this flowering of the creative life as the human revolution that is your mission now and throughout your lives.\textsuperscript{12}
\end{quote}

The founder did not establish the principles of Soka Education in this university, or any other of its affiliates around the world in order to assist the state or any other ideological structure or institutions achieve its ends by training subjects to seek the unattainable. Rather, we are offered a set of principles by which to build lives of the utmost value and satisfaction, undefeated by petty obstacles, opposition, or adversity.

\textsuperscript{11} “Soka Education”, Daisaku Ikeda, p. 174.
\textsuperscript{12} \textit{Ibid}, p. 174.
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Media and Democracy: Creating Value Creating Contents in the 21st Century

Masatake Ito

“Unlike the value of ‘good,’ the value of ‘evil’ constantly has strong force and the large potentials for regeneration and growth. Regardless of its scale, the purpose of evil is to destroy and pound on good”¹

善は創造を、魂の普段の努力を要求します

“The value of ‘good’ requires creation, the everlasting endeavor of the spirit”²

- Chinghiz Aitmatov

Introduction

I believe that entertainment has potential for tremendous impact on education in the United States. David Puttnam, the producer of Chariots of Fire states:

H.G. Wells memorably described civilization as “a race between education and catastrophe.” I have no doubt at all that the electronic audiovisual media, with all the wealth of skills and resources that they command, can help us tilt the balance decisively toward education and away from catastrophe (288).

This quote was, in part, one of the many factors that motivated me to enter this industry. In fact, audio visual art “gives us words, sounds, and sights to work with. This enriches the sense of understanding and knowing” (Bennet, 85). TV beats newspapers as the

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¹ From “Ooinaru Tamashii no Shi” (Ode to The Great Spirit. 大いなる魂の詩) by Daisaku Ikeda and Chinghiz Aitmatov. Translated by Masataka Ito. P. 62.
² From “Ooinaru Tamashii no Shi” (Ode to The Great Spirit. 大いなる魂の詩) by Daisaku Ikeda and Chinghiz Aitmatov. Translated by Masataka Ito. P. 130.
most important news source by better than a 2 to 1 margin (56 percent of American viewers rely primarily on TV, compared to 24 percent on newspapers) (85).

Though David Puttnam has called audio visual art a powerful tool to educate people, the truth is, since audio visual art is a powerful way of transmitting information, it could be used as a way to spread chaos as well as sophisticated information that improves people’s lives. In the first part of this paper, I present how dictators and recent political leaders have used media as a way to mislead or manipulate the public.

Tsunesaburo Makiguchi famously declared: “What is the purpose of life? If one were to express this in just a word, it would have to be ‘happiness.’ The purpose of education must therefore accord with the purpose of life.”3 In the second and third parts of the paper, I will explore ways to create a democratic media, especially using comedy, and the complexities of the challenges in creating media for the happiness of all. I believe that the purpose of democracy must be happiness and accordingly the ultimate purpose of media in a democratic society must also be the happiness of all people.

Audio Visual Arts as a Form of Authority

In Japan, there is a term “Shiken” (Four Authorities). It identifies four types of authorities: 1. Legislation (politics), 2. Administration (bureaucracy), 3. Judicature (law), and 4. Media. The concept behind “Shiken” is that politicians make policies, bureaucracy enforces policies, judiciary enforces the law, and media communicates policies and laws made by the government. In other words, according to this concept, media is the means for the government to enforce its ideas on the public. Interestingly, there are three individuals who have all described cinema as a “weapon.” They are: Mao Zedong, Benito Mussolini, and Woodrow Wilson. For example, Mussolini stated “Cinema is the strongest weapon” on a poster for Cinecitta Studios in Rome. The Studio provided one of the most sophisticated film equipments in Europe and Luigi Freddi, the former head of Italian Fascist Party’s Propaganda Office, secured the government’s involvement in the film industry (Puttnam, 145).

When these men say “weapon,” they mean that cinema is the way to disseminate their political ideologies and fight the opposition to their political propaganda. During World War II, the Japanese militaristic government forced Toho, the leading movie studio in Japan, to produce war propaganda films. Even in the United States, The Walt Disney Studio was going through a time in which it could not continue its business without producing propaganda to fight against the enemies of the United States. In fact, Puttnam states that World War II was significant for the film industry around the world because the government realized how useful films could be to promote war (148). Additionally, Nazis were committed to using the film industry to promote war propaganda. Joseph Goebbels, Hitler’s Minister of Propaganda, and Ludwig Klitzsch of Ufa (the leading film studio in Germany) had created a financial institution called the Filmkreditbank, specifically to provide capital for the expansion of the film industry as a way to strengthen its state control (151). The sad truth is that the film industry during the 20th Century allowed fascists to enforce their self-righteous policy that neglected the well-being of the people and eventually led to the tragedies of war and the deaths of millions.

3 From tmakiguchi.org/quotes.html
A more recent example of the media’s attempts to reinforce the government’s political agenda is post 9/11 in the United States. Rene Huyghe, a French art scholar states: 「広告が、もはや一種の家宅侵入でしかないことは明らかではありませんか。それはいまや独裁政治です。統計によると、ある製品の宣伝が、しつこく命令的に繰り返されると、ついには主婦は、いやでも買うようになってしまうということです。」 “It is apparent that today, advertising is becoming a form of privacy invasions. It has already become a form of dictatorship. According to a statistical study, if a product’s advertisement persistently sends its message repeatedly [in spite of its low quality], eventually, a housewife decides to choose that product over other products (65).”

It is for this reason that Barack Obama and John McCain persistently exchanged enormous amounts of political advertisements that criticized one another in spite of criticisms by major newspapers, TV stations, and the general public against such overflow of ads during the 2008 election.

After 9/11, what the American citizens repeatedly saw on television were the dramatic messages such as “America under attack,” accompanied with dramatic and stimulating orchestral music that made a lot of people feel emotional and patriotic. Bennet states:

When drama is used to bring analysis to mind, it is a good thing. When drama is employed as a cheap emotional device to focus on human conflict and travail, or face and frailty, the larger significance of events becomes easily lost in waves of immediate emotion (42).

The latter was more of the truth for post 9/11 America. To promote the war effort, U.S. government officials repeatedly sent their political messages through TV, messages that people eventually realized to be filled with false information. One example of this would be the link between Al Qaeda and the Iraqi government, as well as the existence of weapons of mass destruction. Condoleezza Rice later admitted on CNN news that the solid evidence that led the U.S to go to war in Iraq was scarce, but “we don’t want the smoking gun to be a mushroom cloud” (Bennet, 119). Apparently, there should’ve have been more analysis of the entire situation, but the government acted on a fear that permeated throughout most of the U.S. population through the media. Media executives never challenged the source since the ratings were very high during the post 9/11 period and they were able to broadcast the nationalistic and patriotic content that attracted national viewers.

Thus, the U.S. media has played a tremendous role in what eventually became “one of the worst blunders in more than two centuries of American foreign policy” (Bennet, 118). It is natural for them to use entertainment factors such as music and drama as they are trying to improve their ratings and attract advertisements in order to secure their financial position. The expectation of the TV viewer is to experience something that is pleasurable or emotionally stimulating (85). Whenever they are reinforcing sophisticated information that serves the public needs, it is considered that the

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4 From “Yami Wa Akatsuki Wo Motomete – Bi to Syukyo to Ningen no Saihakken” (Darkness Seeks Dawn – Rediscovering Beauty, Religion, and Human Beings) by Daisaku Ikeda and Rene Huyghe. Translated by Masataka Ito.
media stations are doing their job. However, there is also a risk that if people are not literate enough, the media can manipulate itself to serve the wrong cause. The use of emotion in political communication is often not aimed at critical thought or judgment (83) and news can be a rich source of fantasy. Thus, a fearful part of audio visual art is its capacity to manipulate people’s opinions.

Consequently, if the public is not literate about how media can mislead them (generally known as media literacy), people can be easily misled by the media. Thus, there needs to be mutual efforts by the media conglomerate news sources, schools must constantly update their agendas to offer media education, and the general public must continuously educate themselves about the role of media in our society.

**Thoughts on the Role of Storytelling in Democratic Society**

What are the roles of media executives, producers, and entertainers in creating a more democratic society? Today, through internet portals such as MySpace, Facebook, and Youtube, people have more avenues to express themselves and share their ideas with others. But we must also be aware of the fact that the abundance of information does not necessarily lead to more sophisticated form of opinions. Ikeda states:

Modern civilization gave birth to new forms of art through new technologies. Cinema is one of them and it is something that a wide range of people from different classes have access to. In order to be accepted to wider groups of people, these types of art need to reflect people’s feelings in a far more direct way than paintings, for instance. Therefore, many of the topics these types of art raise are about mistrust of humans, eroticism, violence, and love of money. Indeed, in the cruel modern society, there are adults whose trust of humanity has been betrayed and who have realized that significant forces that move this society are the mechanism of authority, its greed, and violence. And they recognize that the most reliable things are material wealth and social status. They cannot empathize with
the arts through petty ideals and moral ideologies. I can easily see that they are more likely to empathize with the contents that portray the ugly reality.\textsuperscript{5}

In our society, it is natural for people to simply express themselves using new modern technologies. These expressions should never be restrained in any way. But for democracy to function properly, it requires much more than people expressing what they have in their heart. Ikeda also states: 「ともあれ、芸術は、たんにその時代の反映ではありません。芸術は、その時代を反映しているとともに、また芸術によって表明されたものが、人びとに深く影響を与え、時代の風潮をつくっていくのです」“Art not only reflects the certain time period but also, what artists create are going to deeply influence people’s hearts, creating the new currents of time”\textsuperscript{6} Today, we see both types of people, those who simply express the current trends and those who attempt to create the new currents of time. I consider that the major battlegrounds in today’s civilization, is what H.G. Wells described as “a race between education and catastrophe.” This is the battleground that will occur on TV, theaters, and internet portals, such as YouTube, Facebook, and MySpace.

What is the creativity that serves the true cause of democracy? What is the type of expression that best serves the needs of the people? What is the expression that is considered “just?” The primary concern for the media agencies is not whether their contents are going to serve the best purpose of democracy, but to obtain the best ratings to serve the best interest of advertisers and also the company’s stock holders. Those who attempt to enter the media industry often don’t have a concern to serve the true cause for democracy. As entertainers (including the news as they emphasize the importance of entertainment as the attention-getter), their focus must be getting attention as audio visual arts require massive investments. Even making a 30-second commercial spot can cost over a million dollars.

It is also important to note that even legendary writers such as Shakespeare and Goethe, who contributed to the democratic cause through the representation of the humanities in their plays, did not direct their focus to improving society but, instead, focused on gaining attention and constantly made sure that all of the seats in their theaters were full. Hence, the major creative challenge for the media industry today is to maintain creative freedom that serves the best commercial purpose. The major challenge for a democratic society is to produce artists who can create art that expresses optimism and idealism in the midst of the difficulties of real life. It is what the major classical literature writers such as Dante Alighieri, Victor Hugo, and Lu Xun, who all had a tremendous impact on Ikeda as he kept developing philosophy behind Soka Education, have done in their works of great literature that still have a tremendous impact on us today.

When I say “art that expresses optimism and idealism in the midst of the difficulties of real life” I am not talking about simply expressing a beautiful, idealistic world free of suffering and evil. Such a society is simply impossible. A leading Japanese

\textsuperscript{5} From “Yami Wa Akatsuki Wo Motomete – Bi to Syukyo to Ningen no Saihakken” (Darkness Seeks Dawn – Rediscovering Beauty, Religion, and Human Beings) by Daisaku Ikeda and Rene Huyghe. Translated by Masataka Ito.

\textsuperscript{6} From “Yami Wa Akatsuki Wo Motomete – Bi to Syukyo to Ningen no Saihakken” (Darkness Seeks Dawn – Rediscovering Beauty, Religion, and Human Beings) by Daisaku Ikeda and Rene Huyghe. Translated by Masataka Ito.
animate and a philosopher, Hayao Miyazaki says: “善も悪も、全部それぞれの人間の中にあるんです。世界っていうのはそういうものだと僕はおもっていま
す。)” Good and evil are both existent in every human being. And I think that our
world is naturally the mixture of these two factors.” (100). In addition, Ikeda states:

醜い現実についても、盲目のままにしてはなりません。もし、現実に対し
てまったく盲目であるような教育を施したら、少年たちは、大人になって
現実社会に出たとき、事実に対しても対応できない、ひょんな人間になっている
でしょう。私は、芸術家とは、たんに現実の醜さに対して受け身的
で、それを反映するだけの存在ではないと思います。そうした現実を鋭く
見つめながらも、その奥に人間への信頼を失わず、高い理想への思考を貫
こうとする、たくさんのすぐれた芸術家がいると考えます。

We cannot allow children to be blind about the ugly side of reality. If we educate
children so that they become blind about reality, when they enter society, they
will become so weak and innocent that they will not be able to deal with truth. I
don’t think that artists are those who are passive about the cruelties of life and
simply reflect them in their artistic works. I think that there are many wonderful
artists who observe the difficult realities and yet do not lose faith towards
humanity and strive forward towards higher ideals (100).

The purpose of education in a democratic society is to prepare young people to overcome
the obstacles and challenges that they will face. Truly educational entertainment content
achieves this by helping the viewers to understand the hearts of evil and enabling them to
see beyond it. For example, Miyazaki’s Princess Mononoke, and Akira Kurosawa’s
Rashomon portray evil as something internal and existent in everyone, and yet portray
life as something beautiful. In Princess Mononoke, the main character, Ashitaka, sees
that he needs to control the curse that was put on his arm. According to Miyazaki, 「そ
の過程は、自分の内部で爆発する憎しみをなんとかしてコントロールしようとす
る努力の過程なんですね” “this process is about the efforts to control inner hate that is
bursting out” (99). Not only Ashitaka but unlike every other typical film in which evil
and good are distinctly separate, it is extremely difficult to identify anyone who is
distinctly evil or good in Princess Mononoke. Yet, in spite of the fact that film is filled
with violence and hatred; nature, humans and animal lives are all portrayed as something
beautiful because it is Miyazaki’s conviction that all lives on this Earth can be beautiful
and good even if they all possess an evil nature. And Miyazaki puts Ashitaka as the
protagonist, a young man who fights to bring peace between nature and human beings
knowing his own and their vices. In Rashomon, Akira Kurosawa portrays humans as

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Translated by Masataka Ito.

8 From “Yami Wa Akatsuki Wo Motomete – Bi to Syukyo to Ningen no Saihakken” (闇は暁を求
めて- 美と宗教と人間の再発見) by Daisaku Ikeda and Rene Huyghe. Translated by Masataka Ito.

Translated by Masataka Ito.
beings who all possess selfish views that distort realities at their convenience. Yet in the climax, Kurosawa portrays people with hope because they all have hope, as symbolized by the fact that beautiful children keep coming into this world. And I believe that we are in the age when we need such expression from the depth of human beings because peace is possible only when as many people come to realize the true nature of life, clearly recognize their own evil, put it under control, and still fight to bring order in this disorderly world.

**Thoughts on the Role of Comedy in Creating a Democratic Society**

Though creation of truly democratic entertainment content can be challenging in today’s capitalistic society, one of the most powerful ways that entertainment and media can serve the cause of democracy is comedy. In 1940, when Hitler’s Nazi Germany, Japanese militaristic government, and Italian fascists were in their height of power, it was Charlie Chaplin, the king of comedians who summoned the courage to create one of his most famous works called *The Great Dictator*. Charlie Chaplin could be the first entertainer to severely criticize Hitler as he acted as both the character that is apparently the representation of Hitler and the ordinary Jewish barber. Initially, Chaplin’s production team’s plan was to end the story with fascists and leaders from the rest of the world connecting their hands, singing and dancing. However, since Chaplin felt it would not show enough rage against the dictators who sacrificed ordinary people for the sake of fulfilling their selfish desires, he instead ended the story with a speech by the Jewish barber who was mistaken as the dictator. Here is the portion from the speech (http://jp.youtube.com/watch?v=IGfLAtiUi1A):

We all want to help one another. Human beings are like that. We want to live by each other's happiness - not by each other's misery. We don't want to hate and despise one another … The way of life can be free and beautiful, but we have lost the way. Greed has poisoned men's souls - has barricaded the world with hate - has goose-stepped us into misery and bloodshed. We have developed speed, but we have shut ourselves in. Machinery that gives abundance has left us in want. Our knowledge has made us cynical; our cleverness, hard and unkind. We think too much and feel too little. More than machinery we need humanity. More than cleverness, we need kindness and gentleness. Without these qualities, life will be violent and all will be lost … Soldiers! Don't fight for slavery! Fight for liberty! In the seventeenth chapter of St. Luke, it is written the kingdom of God is within man not one man nor a group of men, but in all men! In you! You, the people, have the power - the power to create machines. The power to create happiness! … By the promise of these things, brutes have risen to power. But they lie! They do not fulfill that promise … Dictators free themselves but they enslave the people. Now let us fight to fulfill that promise! Let us fight to free the world - to do away with national barriers - to do away with greed, with hate and intolerance. Let us fight for a world of reason - a world where science and progress will lead to all men's happiness. Soldiers, in the name of democracy, let us unite!
This speech ends with the barber, speaking to his love interest, Hannah, who suffered through poverty under the dictatorship: “The sun is breaking through! We are coming out of the darkness into the light. We are coming into a new world - a kindlier world, where men will rise above their hate, their greed and their brutality.” I consider this speech to be one of the finest moments in the history of American cinema for the following reasons. First, it showed that cinema is not going to remain a mere instrument of the government. Secondly, it was the voice that came from the common people denouncing the self-righteous rulers. In 1940, most people were going through the time of uncertainty in fighting against the rising Nazi, but even a comedian, the hero of the ordinary people, rose up and summoned his courage and creativity to denounce the dictators that caused misery upon millions. This film was done in the spirit of creating a more positive future rather than simply expressing how dark the time was. Though it is unimaginable today, the film gathered many criticisms among the American people, especially the government, accusing Chaplin of being a communist. Yet, the film became one of his most financially successful films. Chaplin produced significant educational content that contributed to dispel the delusions that filled the minds of the American people: fear of dictators, uncertainty about their safety and future, and the despair of millions of people around the world. It is also important to note here that after the war, Chaplin became a subject of FBI investigations, McCarthyism, and a target of criticism amongst reactionaries. As he could no longer make films in California, Chaplin went to England and didn’t come back to the United States until 1972, when he won an Honorary Oscar.

A more recent example of the power of the media would be during the 2008 Election. It highlighted the potential of comedy’s impact on deciding the course of nation. When Barack Obama was under the strange accusation from the Republicans of “lipstick on a pig” as the implication of slander against Sarah Palin, David Letterman (one of the most popular comedians in the U.S.), invited Obama to be a guest on the Late Show, giving him the opportunity to explain what was going on. He explained in a comical manner that “lipstick on a pig” is an Illinois way of explaining “if you have a bad idea, calling it a change doesn’t make it a better idea.” This helped to dispel the delusion among the public that Obama used it as a way to criticize Palin. It probably does not coincide with the fact that McCain’s polls started to drop right after this show. On September 24, when John McCain abruptly canceled his appearance on David Letterman’s show, Letterman was outraged yet gave a comical, emotional, and yet surprisingly analytical criticism of McCain. Though McCain’s reason for canceling the show was to help Washington deal with the economic crisis, McCain was actually preparing to appear on CBS News instead of heading directly to the airport, which Letterman openly revealed on TV. In addition, he referred to the fact that Palin was not on board while McCain was heading to Washington, helping to combat problems. Shortly following The Late Show was Katie Couric’s infamous September 25th interview with Sarah Palin that showed her stumbling and hesitating as she was questioned. These infamous moments helped to reveal the sides of these two candidates that had not been known to the general public, contributing to Barack Obama’s win.

The art of Letterman’s comedy in this particular occasion was to expose McCain’s irresponsibility without directly stating it. Letterman was always honest with
his feelings towards both McCain and Obama and treated them like anyone else, which also contributed to both the laughter and to providing a better sense of who McCain and Obama are to the general public. In a daring and comical statement in the final part of his outrage toward McCain, Letterman claims “the road to the White House runs right through me!” and it actually sounded very convincing considering Letterman’s status in the public. Finally, on October 17th, McCain came on the show and openly apologized to Letterman. This was a beautiful moment in which the leading political party in the U.S. openly apologized to one of the leading public figures right on TV. Since this type of open apology rarely happens in the world today, there is a reason to feel some optimism in the current democratic system in the U.S. in spite of all the problems.

In addition, Jon Stewart, Bill Maher, and Steven Colbert, who are also leading comedians, leveled the playing field of the political candidates, by both entertaining and informing the general public through the use of comedy. The purpose of TV and comedy in democracy must always be to bring the leading political figure from a comfort zone to where anyone can see what his/her true personality is like. Ironically and as counterintuitive as it may sound, this attitude contributed to the entertainment values and successes of Chaplin, Stewart, Colbert, Maher, and Letterman. Such individuals who create new streams of public opinions through their creative magic are also indispensable in constructing a more peaceful and democratic society. Ikeda states:

I think that in a society in which one sect, one artist, or one novelist is occupying people’s minds, gaining respect like a God, its people are not spontaneously choosing what art and novels to enjoy. In reality, such society has the tendency in which its people are obeying other people or public opinion. In this sense, the origin and the consequence of a phenomenon in which one art or one novel is ruling the public’s mind is the lack of awareness that each individual must be the center of focus and the significant source of expression … In this regard, it is more important than anything else to have a society in which there is always a
diversity, and as many individuals with diverse talents showing their abilities with a sense of hope, finding a sense of joy and fulfillment in such process (235). 10

To create a society filled with such diversity is a challenge because society is always facing the danger in which entire nations move towards disastrous cause, as we have seen during the World War II and also the War on Iraq.

To achieve a more democratic society through media/art, we need more creative individuals around the world who can overcome potential opposition based on the sense of mission, justice and courage. This is what Chaplin and Letterman have done in their crucial moments that have influenced the course of history. Given that entertainment is the expression of the individual’s inner state of mind, such attitude is also needed in creating commercial art that truly inspires the audience. Huyghe states:

The more that one attempts to overcome oppositions, the richer and fuller the inner life becomes. When facing the opposing factor, a weak spirit compromises by accepting one condition that he/she finds acceptable. In contrast, when faced with obstacles, such impediment motivates a strong spirit to overcome the opposition. [Instead of compromise.] Strong spirit attempts to create harmony between two opposing dimensions. As a result, this harmony makes the spirit richer (228).11

Entertainment and art are the business of “inspiration.” Considering “inspiration” and “beauty” can come from the harmony of different opposing factors, what Huyghe has mentioned here has strong implications towards what contributes for the creativity that provides more inspiration for the audience. Founder of Soka Education, Makiguchi12, Nichiren Daishonin13, a Buddhist monk who lived in 13th Century, and Dante Alighieri14,

10 From “Yami Wa Akatsuki Wo Motomete – Bi to Syukyo to Ningen no Saihakken” (Darkness Seeks Dawn – Rediscovering Beauty, Religion, and Human Beings) by Daisaku Ikeda and Rene Huyghe. Translated by Masataka Ito.
11 From “Yami Wa Akatsuki Wo Motomete – Bi to Syukyo to Ningen no Saihakken” (Darkness Seeks Dawn – Rediscovering Beauty, Religion, and Human Beings) by Daisaku Ikeda and Rene Huyghe. Translated by Masataka Ito.
12 Makiguchi wrote Philosophy of Value and The System of Value-Creating Pedagogy, which became the inspiration for Soka Education system.
13 Soka Gakkai, a Buddhist lay organization that supported the founding of Soka Schools around the world, is an organization that promotes Nichiren’s philosophy and his vision for world peace.
an Italian poet also from the same era, are a few examples of who Huyghe states as the “strong spirit” that have created harmony in society. Tunesaburo Makiguchi died in prison by opposing the militaristic government and its policies to enslave the public under its selfish foreign expansionist agenda. His letters, written while he was enslaved, have become a type of art that still has the power to inspire. Nichiren Daishonin was daring enough to challenge the ruling government of his era, while other Buddhist monks became the puppets by the political authorities to rule the people. He lived in a time when the nation was under turmoil and made a determination to save his country by propagating the Buddha’s teachings in spite of the oppositions. Dante was courageous enough to portray even the Pope as someone who is burned by the hellish fire of Inferno for the corruption that he has spread within the church in his Magnus Opus, Divine Comedy. The life stories of these courageous men are the ultimate entertainment/art that provide inspiration for the future generations regardless of the times.

It is also important to note that true creativity does not come from simply having a “strong mind.” The strength of mind and actions must be based on the strong awareness of society and its needs. Ikeda states:

Creativity is much more than simply having the occasional good idea. Of course, even to come up with such ideas requires a firm foundation of basic knowledge. And creative work in the fields of scholarship and learning is incomparably more demanding. It is like a mountain pinnacle: It cannot exist without a broad base of knowledge and a solid foundation of deep thinking and reflection. (27)

Neal Baer, a past writer/producer of ER (a mega-hit TV series), is a graduate of Harvard Medical School. The stories he wrote were based on his real experiences as a medical student and the drama he saw and felt. I asked him if any of his motivation in storytelling is to educate people. He answered that he is not interested in educating people, but rather in finding good stories. His contribution of exposing a part of society that a lot of people may not be aware of is worthy of praise. Even today, his daily routine is to look through newspapers and TV news to seek the stories that could be turned into powerful drama.

Chaplin’s last speech, the tirade against the dictators, was not possible without Chaplin being aware of the rhetoric of classical literature, especially the Holy Bible. Tina Fey, Jon Stewart, and Steven Colbert cannot be funny in their performances without being well-read and aware about the problems of today’s politics. And Letterman cannot possibly have political leaders on his show and be entertaining if he is not aware of the world politics.

Nichiren’s and Makiguchi’s courageous actions were not possible without their knowledge of scholarship of history and philosophy that was accompanied with their sense of mission to save their country. Konosuke Matsushita, the founder of Panasonic, found that the greatness of Nichiren came from his sense of mission (or the sense that he had to act the way he did for a higher purpose, such as contributing to the happiness of larger groups of people). Matsushita states that Nichiren was able to gain strength to

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14 Current Soka Gakkai Honorary President, Daisaku Ikeda, often compares Dante’s philosophy to Nichiren’s in his lectures and writings (i.e. Ikeda’s Dante Alighieri: In Tribute to the Century of Youth, published in 2003).
continue until the very end in spite of the human nature to be scared, to be weak, and to compromise when faced with adversary, because of his sense of mission (84). I felt something similar to the words and actions of Nichiren and Makiguchi when I saw Chaplin’s *The Great Dictator*. Their works are still inspiring many people around the world today because of their expression of a rich inner state of mind. Goethe famously stated that most of the disasters/problems today are caused by the people who refused to speak their minds in the past. These groups of people represent the fine examples of the voices that contribute to diversifying and deepening public opinions, contributing to make society more democratic, shifting the tides of the eternal race and the battle between education and catastrophe.

**Conclusion**

The Latin word “Classis” which is the base for the word “Classics” means a group of battleships that come to save a nation during the time of crisis. Hollywood grew enormously during the 1930s, the time of economic crisis, by constantly producing content that gave a sense of hope and fulfillment to the public. Additionally, in post-war Japan, a time when the country went through economic hardships, its film industry experienced its golden age by creating hopeful content that inspired many. Though the media industry around the world fell as a mere tool for the dictators to impose their own policy, there were a few courageous acts against the enslavement of the media industry. Even today, throughout the world, we face the challenge of diversifying the public’s opinion towards the interest of the larger groups of people through media to prevent it from becoming the government tool to simply impose its own political policies.

Today, we are again facing an economic crisis that is putting millions of people under a sense of cynicism, mistrust, and despair. I believe that because the time is dark, entertainment and art need to thrive, in order to help turn this crisis into an opportunity. This needs to be done through our own awareness and knowledge of the time and also with a sense of mission. Recently, as an intern, I was fortunate enough to be involved with producing a commercial for Union Bank of California, targeting Japanese audiences on the West Coast. It took us four months to produce a 30-second commercial, due to the economic crisis. This campaign was called the “WA (和)” campaign, consisting of a Chinese character that represented a sense of trust, compassion, and harmony among people. This character “WA” is the second character of the word “HEIWA（平和）,” meaning “peace” in Japanese. Below is the script that we decided to go with:

そのシンプルな言葉には、さまざまな思いがこめられています。
それは、調和や、なごやかさや、思いやり。
それは、深い信頼に根ざした、強く豊かな結びつき。
それは、私たちの目指す、お客様との関係。
あなたの未来を、いっしょに考え、計画し、実現していくために。

ユニオン・バンク・オブ・カリフォルニア

This simple word consists of many meanings
Harmony, friendliness, compassion
A strong and rich relationship based on the deep sense of trust
This is the type of relationship that we aim to have with our customers
To think about, plan, and realize your future together
Union Bank of California

I have no doubt that this commercial will contribute to not only the better public image of Union Bank of California, but also a sense of what is important during this time of economic crisis among the Japanese people living in the West Coast. It is my sincere wish that media industries help educate people towards a more sophisticated understanding of the world that will allow them to have a hopeful life amidst the difficulties of real life. Ikeda states: “life’s inherent creativity, its dynamic vitality, is brought to the surface only through the strenuous exertions of a life of consistent action” (48).
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Democracy and Freedom of Speech
A Right vs. A Responsibility

Cliff Tanaka and Fumihiko Tominaga

Introduction

I am [not] against freedom of speech or freedom of the press…but as I have indicated in the past, freedom of speech is not a license. It does entail exercising responsibility and judgment. ¹ – Kofi Annan, Former UN Secretary General

Many people today live in societies where they are free to exercise their right to the freedom of speech. Democratization of societies around the world has allowed information to flow freely, liberating people from the chains of censorship and empowering people by granting them the right to a freedom of speech. In addition, with the increasing accessibility to the internet, information including voices and opinions of people are transcending borders and cultures, becoming easier than ever to access. The empowerment that this right to free speech can nurture is boundless; yet, we must also be aware of its concomitant harmful potential. The right to a free speech, technology and the combination of both can give impetus to falsehood, demagogy, and malicious and deceptive speech. This is mainly because people are irresponsibly abusing their freedom of speech, as indicated in the above quote by Kofi Annan. Nonetheless, in order to realize a true democracy in contemporary society today, free speech plays a vital role. This paper tackles to understand the underlying causes of this dilemma and provides that instilling responsibility is the solution for this right to thrive in humanity. Through analyzing the philosophies and practices of political leaders, educators, philosophers, and peace activists, this paper looks to redefine the notion of free speech from being a right to becoming a responsibility.

First, this paper will use Professor Mark Cooray's article, Freedom of Speech and Expression, to examine the significance of the right to free speech in a democracy. Next, by analyzing the history of the Soviet Union's democratization and the works of Mikhail Gorbachev, this paper will examine and evaluate how people in contemporary society treat this right. This is followed by an argument based on Dewey's claim that a

Democracy is realized through a mutual communal experience in which everyone bears responsibility to maintain a harmonious community. This leads to the notion that responsibility is the key to resolving the issues of abusive use of the right to free speech. The next section cites Makiguchi in explaining that self-reflection and value are key constituents in instilling responsibility within the masses. By citing Ikeda and Freire, this paper elucidates dialogue as a summation of speech, self-reflection, and value. Conclusively, this paper will assert the paramount necessity of implementing Soka Education into modern day society to help alleviate the issues that overshadow society.

**Democracy and the right to Free Speech**

For many centuries, citizens of countries and territories have fought for their freedom and liberation. This desire for freedom often came from their enmity toward the dictatorships and authoritarian governments’ unequal distribution of wealth and power. In order to rectify social and political inequalities (mainly the distribution of power), many countries adopted the system of democracy to equally distribute formal political power. This paper defines “democracy” as most commonly defined in the contemporary world. Today, democracy is defined as providing the citizens with fundamental rights and a just system through legal and moral principles. Of the many principles that constitute a democracy, this paper will particularly shed light on the right to a freedom of speech.

People throughout history have fervently fought for the right to free speech in efforts to liberate themselves from the totalitarian and dictatorial regimes that attempt to oppress people’s thoughts. This is because freedom of speech stands as a vital component in actualizing a democracy.

Professor Mark Cooray notes in his article, *Freedom of Speech and Expression*, that, “One of its [freedom of speech] most important functions is that decision-making at all levels is preceded by discussion and consideration of a representative range of views.”² When there is an issue at hand that requires discussion, it is always better to consider both sides of the argument rather than making premature judgments based on biased preferences. Freedom of speech allows both parties to make relevant arguments and lets the observing parties to pass judgments based on those arguments. Spiritual leader, educator, and peace activist, Daisaku Ikeda asserts that:

Though one cannot deny the importance of citizens' movements, it is the responsibility of the nation's elected representatives to carry out thorough discussion and thereby arrive at a solution. It should never be forgotten that the very life of the democratic system lies in tenacious dialogue and debate aimed at reaching a consensus.³

Hence, in a system without a freedom of speech, a decision will most likely be made without much consultation, which will in effect imperfectly reflect the opinions of the people.

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Cooray also argues that because freedom of speech benefits not only the people but also leaders at the top, “it is important at all levels in society.” Freedom of speech, he states, “is most important for the government...because when criticisms of a government are freely voiced, the government has the opportunity to respond to answer unfair comments and criticisms about its actions.” Hence, a government that prohibits free speech is not open to criticism. A government that is not open to criticism is vulnerable to verbal rumors, sporadic social uprisings as seen in China, and criticisms and falsehoods about the government that can potentially circulate amongst people. Therefore, it is clear that the freedom of speech is vital to democracy because it allows citizens to voice and discuss their concerns freely and helps reflect public opinion.

The glory of free speech is the allowance of an individual to express oneself freely; however, if people are to take advantage of this right, we must do so with clear awareness, magnanimity, and self-reflection. In his dialogue with Mikhail Gorbachev—the former President of the Soviet Union and Russia, Daisaku Ikeda describes the sensitivity of language by citing Vaclav Hazel, president of the Czech Republic:

He [Vaclav Hazel] says that, unlike honest words that fill society with the spirit of freedom, some words are hypnotic and false. He warns against words that arouse fanaticism. Such frenzied and deceiving words, he says, are dangerous and lead even to death.6

The right to free speech is, thus, a double-sided sword: It can be wielded to eradicate ignorance and foster knowledge or used to invoke jargon that deludes our minds with falsehoods. Because the nature of free speech poses the possibility for both prejudice and liberation, we must find ways to balance the dilemma between free speech and censorship. Gorbachev expresses this dilemma, stating that, “This then is the dilemma: either freedom of speech permitting falsehood and demagoguery or censorship repressing creative and spiritual development.”7

**Freedom of speech in our contemporary world**

The vast majority of people in most societies today have the right to free speech, allowing people access to the “truth.” The “truth” in this case is defined by the open access to all information and the freedom to express grievances and criticism freely toward the government and towards one another. Although this freedom has enabled citizens to see through truths of matters and has brought many benefits, it has also reared other issues such as social distress and distrust. For instance, criminality is worse in a democratic country than it is in a totalitarian country. Gorbachev warns, "False prophets have always been ready to put freedom to evil uses... contemporary democracies pay a

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5 Ibid.
7 Ibid., pg.47
high price for individual liberty and the freedom of choice.8 A more concrete example can be found in Russia.

Gorbachev, in his dialogue with Ikeda, expresses the state of perplexity he experienced when implementing Glasnost, a reform policy looking to allow the free flow of information. He states, “Freedom of speech can be used to evoke the good and the reasonable or to evoke violence. But does this mean that the Russian people had no right at all to the truth?”9 As a result of Glasnost and later Perestroika10, the Soviet Union collapsed and the country was reborn under a new system of democracy and name: Russia. Under a democracy, citizens of Russia had obtained access to governmental information and were free to express themselves. Democratization surely liberated people of the Soviet Union from the despotic communist rule in many ways; as a result however, Russia unfortunately exemplified that the right to a freedom of speech evoked the latter of Gorbachev’s concern, evil. For example, during times in the Soviet Union, people were not allowed to appear drunk on the streets. If the police found them drunk, they were sent to detoxification centers. In addition, the police would dispatch reports to the drunks’ workplaces. Gorbachev explains that in Russia today, the streets are rife with drunks because “a significant segment of society equates freedom with license, [and] young people behave any way they like and equate dissipation and dissolution with democracy.” Expressing his frustration, he declares, “[People] identifying democracy with anti-culture disturbs me more than anything else.”11 Gorbachev censures the youth's misconceived notion of democracy and freedom of expression with deviance and the lack of respect for development or improvement of the mind. He believes that people are misunderstanding the implications behind true liberty and freedom, reprimanding them for abusing their rights under the name of democracy.

The problem is that people have taken their rights for granted. As seen in Russia, people abuse their rights and become oblivious to the countries’ past struggles that led up to their liberty. Under its oppressive rule, albeit the streets were clean from loitering drunkards, people still complained about the restraints placed on their ability to express themselves and the lack of freedom. Yet, as soon as those bans were lifted, drunken people pervaded the streets. Some may argue that repulsion and disobedience were fixed in the mindsets of the people and that democratization only acted as a catalyst for it to surface. However, regardless of whether the cause was inherent or extraneous, people need to be more conscientious of the impact their actions may have on other people and their environment. Moreover, with regards to freedom of speech, people must take extra caution in expressing their opinions because this right is realized under the principle that value is the underlying measure for when and how it should be used.

Being negligent to remember or completely indifferent about the past struggles to obtain freedom leads people down a dangerous path. Ikeda illustrates that: “Truth beckons and attracts as long as it is forbidden fruit. People forget about it when it

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8 Ibid., pg. 46
9 Ibid., pg. 45
10 Perestroika is a set of economic and political reforms put in place by former Soviet Union President Mikhail Gorbachev in 1987. Gorbachev reforms had contributed to the economic decline and eventual destruction of the Soviet Union. At the same time, the Gorbachev programs did start Russia on the precarious road to full-scale economic reform.
becomes as accessible as air. Nonetheless, I am disturbed by the possibility that such forgetfulness conceals apathy and cynicism.”

Negligence and forgetfulness of youth today afflicts societies. When people were first given the right to speech, it was used to disperse information that the government restricted the public from accessing. It enlightened people of information that was never available to them. It also helped spread their voices to the world outside. As more information flooded the social arena, however, there was also an increase in the amount of falsehoods and embellishments. In this way, as time passed and people were neutralized from the initial excitement, free speech derailed toward verbal malice and mendacity.

The internet is a quintessence of modern day abuse of the right to free speech. There is an abundance of information accessible in cyberspace; however, people should be more inclined to ask themselves, what percent of the information online is truthful? For discussion, the exact number is insignificant because the main issue is the excessive amount of erroneous web information available to the public. If the material online and verbal opinions are synonymous to one another in terms of the freedom to express oneself, all matter pertaining to free speech should be treated equally. It is clear that if the false information online was instead displayed on public streets, the person responsible for displaying it will undergo lawful punishments.

Where then, do people draw the line between creative expression and abusive speech? Regulation based on the law or based on personal judgment? Today, people go to the extent of finding loopholes in the system merely to voice their ego. People's will to disregard the values of free speech has shown to prevail over their will to cherish it. Gorbachev notes that Russia was unsuccessful in cherishing free speech because of its lack of experience with democracy.

In the mass, Russians do not welcome liberty as the freedom to choose or as a sense of responsibility for one’s life and the well being of one's intimates. In this, no specific individuals are culpable. Our reluctance to accept responsibility is a misfortune arising from insufficient experience with democracy and the undeveloped structure of our civil society.

He thus points out that the key to democracy is instilling a sense of responsibility. Therefore, people must fundamentally transform their preconceived notion of free speech from a right to a responsibility. People do not have the right to a freedom of speech; rather they have the responsibility to protect their freedom of speech.

**Responsible Speech**

As the role and responsibility of individuals shaping history grows, it becomes all the more critical that we each learn to live as creative and active global citizens.

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12 Ibid. pg. 47
recognizing and working to fulfill our respective responsibilities in the new millennium.\(^{14}\) – Daisaku Ikeda

In our world today, people are always constrained by time, busily trying to complete responsibilities within a given time frame. People are often overwhelmed by the number of responsibilities in their private, social and work life. They are so caught up in their web of responsibilities that they are distracted or incognizant of how to prioritize their responsibilities. An example is the responsibility to protect this freedom of speech. People may not even regard protecting the freedom of speech as their responsibility or let alone as a responsibility. That is because this responsibility is unexposed and intangible, similar to a responsibility to control emotions. Many people tend to disregard emotional responsibilities; for in a sense, it is correct to say that people are not obliged to by law. If people disagree with laws, they often deal with it by complaining and criticizing or by finding loopholes without being caught. Such actions are selfish and disharmonize society. People do not realize that they all share a single social space where they are interconnected through a web of actions and emotions. Thus, no matter how insignificant they think their thoughts, actions, or words may be, they are undeniably affecting their environment. People must therefore embrace the interdependency that is the very nature of humanity. David Hansen, a professor of philosophy at Teachers College Columbia University, cites John Dewey to support his assertion that a democracy must be realized through communal and societal efforts.

\[\text{A democracy is more than a form of government. It is more than a system of laws, institutions, and practices such as voting. Rather, democracy is primarily a mode of associate living, of conjoint communicated experience.}\] Democracy comes into being through expanded communication, shared experience, and an abiding disposition to seek interaction with others rather than to shun them.\(^{15}\)

Everyone is a role player in a system of democracy where people live together and enjoy a "communicated experience." Therefore, everyone bears the responsibility of maintaining a harmonious community. In doing so, people must be able to work with each other and avoid confrontations. Any type of offensive or hurtful speech should be voiced only after much contemplation and self-reflection, not by pure impulse. Taking responsibility for what you say entails constant self-reflection through thinking-about-what-you-say-before-you-say-it. As children learn this concept in grade schools, all citizens should be meticulously aware of ‘slip of the tongues’ and irrational speech. Through being responsible, people are able to “interact with others in genuine rather than solely self-serving ways infuses the societal ethos, however microscopically in each particular case, with expanded communication and meaning.”\(^{16}\)

Self-empowerment through responsible speech is the key to expanding meaningful communication. Moreover, because no law or regulation is full-proof against abusive speech, it must start with the individual. Although the potential to abuse this right

\(^{14}\) Ikeda, Daisaku. 2001. For the sake of peace. Santa Monica: Middleway Press. pg. 13
\(^{15}\) Hansen, David T. 2007 Ethical Visions of Education: Philosophies in Practice. New York: Teachers College Press. Pg. 44
\(^{16}\) Ibid.
is latent at all times, people must first change their way of thinking and through this change, people can start to see a change in their actions.

People must come to the point where they are able to trust each other to be responsible. Ikeda states:

[The] danger that false prophets will make use of the freedom of speech is everywhere. Nonetheless, in spite of all moral and spiritual catastrophes and all religious, class, and national obscurantism, the survival of good sense, conscience, and faith in human spiritual powers constitutes the meaning of civilization.17

Once people realize their potential to be responsible, the world will be filled with a true spirit of freedom. In order to fully liberate oneself and one's minds, he/she must start with replacing the traditional notion of a right to the freedom of speech with “our responsibility” to dignify the freedom of speech. When exercising speech with responsibility, people must express themselves through valued rhetoric. The dignity behind responsible speech is its inherent value.

Speech and Value

Makiguchi, the founder of Soka Education places foremost emphasis on value. In Soka Education, author Daisaku Ikeda elucidates Makiguchi’s views on value. “The fundamental criterion for value, in Makiguchi’s view, is whether something adds to or detracts from, advances or hinders the human condition.”18 If one’s opinion adds to and advances the human condition, it is said to have value but if it detracts from and hinders it, then it is not of value. Thus, people that exercise their freedom of speech must do so with value. Everything being said must be for the betterment and enrichment of the lives of oneself and others.

Some countries outlaw hate speech and those who transgress are punished by law. The reason behind such lawful persecutions is inherent in the right to a freedom of speech. In some democratic countries like Israel, when public safety is at risk because of malevolent speech, matters are taken into the hands of the law. Former President of the Supreme Court of Israel, Aharan Barak, noting an example, states that:

[In Israel], the principled balance between freedom of speech and public safety in Israeli case law is that the state may restrict the freedom of speech to protect public peace only if there is a near certainty that unrestricted speech would severely compromise public safety.19

The concept of free speech is very sensitive depending on its usage; therefore, it must be subject to personal judgment. It can either be a key to liberation or a threat to public safety and security. The purpose of free speech is to emancipate people of their

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18 Ikeda, Daisaku. 2001. Soka Education. Santa Monica: Middleway Press. pg. 17
freedom to express how they think and feel. Yet, because unbridled speech can also potentially be malicious and prejudiced, people must put foremost emphasis on placing value on the things we say. This is due to the subjective nature of value.

Makiguchi’s idea of value is, thus, important to free speech. As Makiguchi explains, "Value arises from the relationship between the evaluating subject and the object of evaluation. If either changes relative to the other, it is only obvious that the perceived value will change." In this case, the evaluating subject is referring to the person being spoken to and the object of evaluation is what is being said. Value is derived from evaluating the relationship between the two. If what is being said positively affects the person being spoken to, it is said to have produced value. On the other hand, if what is being said is perceived negative by the subject of evaluation (the person being spoken to), then there is little value produced.

The way people react and respond to what is said to them is subject to their interpretations, emotions and mood. There is neither a line drawn out nor are there guidelines to explain what constitutes offensive or emotionally provocative speech. Depending on the situation, the comment, opinion or voice may be interpreted and digested differently. Thus, people must not allow their myopic views to thwart the possibility of value. Intolerance and self-righteousness impede the expansion and liberation of the minds of youth. Ikeda states, "As long as they [people] remain shut up within their myths, no matter how much they may talk–indeed, the more long-winded and bombastic they are–they are incapable of carrying on a dialogue, only a monologue."

People must not lock themselves up in a box of limited perceptions. Instead, they must liberate themselves through mutual commitment to understanding one another. Value is the key to liberating and understanding one another. Through finding and placing value on the things people say, humanity as a whole will be able to engage in a conversation that is more than a monologue. In order to realize this, it becomes of utmost importance to ensure valuing free speech.

Speech must be based on value to rid of standards as well. The falsity in human interaction is the people’s tendency to standardize perceptions and ideas. Standards hinder people from penetrating the true nature of humans. It forms people into sizes and shapes, and their uniqueness and creativity are lost. We must rid ourselves of such standards and measure each person individually; for in the end, "the person must be the measure of all." Realizing a democracy rests on the trust between people because the crux of a democracy are the voices of the people. However, unbridled speech leads to utter chaos. Humanity has come to a point where irresponsible speech instigating controversies are ubiquitous and people are becoming more sensitive to personal opinions than ever before. These trends thus demand people to take caution and self-reflect before expressing themselves. Ikeda quotes Montaigne in saying:

It was useless to engage in dialogue with those whose views were not supported by rational, critical ability. He saw no purpose in discussion with those.

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21 Ikeda, Daisaku. 2001. For the sake of peace. Santa Monica: Middleway Press. pg. 50
undisciplined or wavering in what they believed. He also stated that this ability to think critically included the capacity for rigorous self-examination.\(^{23}\)

The importance of critical thinking is further supported by Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator. He states that "true dialogue cannot exist unless the dialoguers engage in critical thinking."\(^{24}\) It is only through exercising value in speech that we will be able to be united and actualize a true democracy. Orchestrating value in speech will naturally result in a dialogue.

*Speech and Value makes Dialogue*

Only after people start to put foremost value on what they say, is dialogue possible. Paradoxically speaking, dialogue is possible only between two responsible individuals. Ikeda quotes Nagasena\(^{25}\) in calling such an ideal form of dialogue “a speech of the wise.”\(^{26}\) In a speech of the wise, two individuals must be truly responsible for what they say and respectful of what their counterpart says. Ikeda writes, “In the speech of the wise, the parties never become angry over explanations, interpretations, criticisms, revisions, distinctions and fine demarcations made in the course of debate.”\(^{27}\) Therefore, a meaningful dialogue, as John Dewey advocated, necessitates the mutual understanding and compassion of individuals towards one another through responsible speech. Such authentic dialogue, expanded communication, and shared experience are essential if people are to establish a more just, equitable, and democratic society. Ikeda concludes, "I believe that dialogue in the speech of the wise is the form best suited for solving the perplexing questions that overshadow modern society.”\(^{28}\) The perplexing questions that Ikeda speaks of here are the increasing criminalities resulting from dissolution and dissipations amongst the youth today. Fortunately, because we live in a democratic society where free speech is given to people as a prerogative, people should be inclined to turn speech into dialogue.

Freire observed dialogue as a mere extension of speech, as words more or less. He states:

As we attempt to analyze dialogue as a human phenomenon, we discover something which is the essence of dialogue itself: the word... Within the word we find two dimensions, reflection and action, in such radical interaction that if one is sacrificed—even in part—the other immediately suffers. There is no true word

\(^{23}\) Ikeda, Daisaku. 2001. For the sake of peace. Santa Monica: Middleway Press. pg. 56
\(^{25}\) Nagasena was a Buddhist sage who lived about 150 BCE. His answers to questions about Buddhism posed by King Menander I, the Indo-Greek king of northwestern India, are recorded in, “The Questions of King Menander,” or *Milinda Pañha*. The philosophical debate held between Nagasena and King Menander is reminiscent of Plato’s dialogues. Menander precedes the debate by asking the King, “Your Majesty, if you are prepared to debate in the speech of the wise, then I shall debate with you. However, should Your Majesty wish to debate in the speech of kings, then I shall decline.” Understanding perfectly what Nagasena means, the King then responds by agreeing to debate in the speech of the wise.
\(^{27}\) Ibid.
\(^{28}\) Ibid., pg. 142
that is not at the same time a praxis. Thus, to speak a true word is to transform the world. 29

The two elements, reflection and action, which Freire refers to, can be compared to responsibility and speech respectively. Freire elucidates that action is a conversion of the word or speech into mere activism. It “negates the true praxis and makes dialogue impossible.” 30 Correspondingly, he calls word or speech without reflection (or responsibility) verbalism, which in this case becomes an empty word. Something he calls, “an idle chatter...an alienated and alienating ‘blah’.” 31 Thus, as Freire explains, words or speech must be superseded by reflection. Since people have the responsibility of ensuring valued speech and responsibility is nurtured through finding value and engaging in self-reflection, people must self-reflect through evaluating the value behind their thoughts, views, and words. Ikeda, paralleling Freire's ideas, uses the term “self-mastery” to describe the notion of reflection and responsibility necessary for a dialogue. He states, "True dialogue is only possible when both parties are committed to self-mastery."

Soka Education and Dialogue

In Soka Education, Ikeda proclaims that, “Dialogue must continue, but it must be useful and profitable and based on responsibility and trust, not irresponsible arguments.” 32 At the heart of Soka Education is the individuals’ willingness to engage in a sincere dialogue. Mutual commitment to understanding one another through rational, responsible, and altruistic rhetoric is essential in actualizing Soka Education. Ikeda articulates, “It is only in the burning furnace of intense, soul-baring exchanges – the ceaseless and mutually supporting processes of inner and outer dialogue between one’s ‘self’ and a profoundly internalized ‘other’ – that our beings are tempered and refined.” 33 Ikeda points out two facets of dialogue: the inner and outer. The inner dialogue is the value we must place on what we express through thorough self-reflection. Only through this self-reflection can a truly genuine, altruistic and humanistic product of speech be born. The outer dialogue is what is manifested through our sense of responsibility. Through fostering a sense of responsibility to protect speech - the superlative nature of human beings, we are able to manifest and utilize it with optimal value. Thus, the pedagogy of Soka Education teaches that dialogue is the product of the value and responsibility manifested through inner and outer dialogue. Soka Education emphasizes the synthesis of both inner and outer dialogue to realize a harmonious democracy.

In today’s society where hate crimes are widespread and people are nonchalantly expressing themselves with little concern for their peers and neighbors, it becomes necessary for an educational philosophy based on humility and compassion to upset the wretched, fatalistic, and cynical world. Soka Education teaches that for a harmonious society to be realized, the mutual commitment of people to wholeheartedly engage in

30 Ibid., pg. 88
32 Ikeda, Daisaku. 2001. Soka Education. Santa Monica: Middleway Press. pg. 168
33 Ibid., pg. 43
sincere dialogue is necessary, thus displaying it to be the quintessence of a truly humanistic pedagogy. It is for this reason that people must categorically embrace the philosophy of Soka Education and actualize its principles in their lives.

**Conclusion**

“The Russian experience suggests that merely allowing human beings to express their thoughts and feelings freely is enough to change a whole nation.”34 This pithy statement by Gorbachev illustrates the impact that people’s voices can make when conjoined. Likewise, people must first realize the significance behind our ability to freely express ourselves. Often times we take a democracy for granted because as humans, we must be granted our rights. However, so long as we are humans, we must value ourselves and others in addition to our rights. We are able to bring out our fullest human potential through a humanistic life. In order to remind ourselves of the value behind our rights, we must take responsibility to protect them. Taking responsibility means self-reflecting upon your voice and opinion and expressing them in a way that will best expand communication and meaning. This will consequently and naturally lead to a dialogue through which the harmonious society that we’ve been envisaging will be actualized. It is at this time when the demand for dialogue is at the apex for humanity’s sustenance and it becomes crucial to embrace and expand the philosophy of Soka Education to everyone.

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Soka Education Student Research Project (SESRP)

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The **purpose** of the Soka Education Student Research Project (SESRP) is:

- To inspire individuals to embody and perpetuate the spirit of Soka Education
- To create a community united in protecting the values of Soka Education
- To encourage thorough and rigorous research into the meaning, possibilities, and development of Soka Education

The **objectives** of the SESRP are:

- To establish Soka Education as an acknowledged field of research
- To develop a centralized source and venue for information and discussion on Soka Education
- To build and maintain relationships with other institutions to promote Soka Education

*The mission of Soka University of America is to foster a steady stream of global citizens committed to living a contributive life.*

**Mottos**

Be philosophers of a renaissance of life
Be world citizens in solidarity for peace
Be pioneers of a global civilization

Foster leaders of culture in the community
Foster leaders of humanism in society
Foster leaders of pacifism in the world
Foster leaders for the creative coexistence of nature and humanity
"I wish therefore to deeply affirm once more that the primal mission of the university is to temper and forge democratic ideals, rooting them in society as a form of service to all of humankind."

-Daisaku Ikeda

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