BNU

manifesto

Education, a necessity or a luxury!

A manifesto by

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An artist, an educator, and a writer, Shahid Malis is a Lahore, Pakistan native and enrolled in MA Art education program, 2020. This manifesto is his final project of his discipline, "History and philosophy of art education." This manifesto is his attempt to present his philosophy of art education and exhortation to introduce a discourse.

Under the guidance and supervision of his teachers, facilitators, and most appropriately, his mentors:

Ms Madyha Leghari

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[1]Is the education a luxury or a necessity? Does it has any practical implication or just satisfies the soul? Education is important for the process of metamorphosis in a person in a variety of ways. It can exert its influence in a visionary or virtually or in both contexts. The most important liability which is ascribed by the education is dispensation of the knowledge for sake of knowledge. This liability is rather social, moral, but religious as well. According to Islamic point of view giving knowledge is equivalent to seeking knowledge and in certain aspects more indispensible.

However other than seeking and dispensing the knowledge there is another component which is less esteemed usually i.e. application of knowledge. Basically education is divaricated into two disciplines mainly; one is humanities i.e. conceptual and the second one is skills based and practical, under which science, mathematics and arts come although the practice of fine arts comes last in this hierarchy.

The education of humanities is usually considered as the knowledge of books which should be confined to the books only and it has no practical implication. The thing that baffles is what is the need of humanities than? What are the consequences that such an impractical discipline, evolved over a longer period of time, still exists?

None of the education is purely theoretical and it has a scope of practice in society and to selves. The education of humanities might be looking like this because it is treated like this. Skills based education is beneficial to economic prosperity whereas on the other hand humanities talks about the spirituality, religion, ethics, philosophy, environment etc. That might be the reason that economically and scientifically the society is approaching the maximal whereas socially and ethically it is gradually deteriorating.

[2]According to platonic theory education is the most important obligation for a society. It is important to self realization and augmentation of economic activities. However in this theory art education is articulated at last. According to Plato art is nothing more than an imitation. Whereas other disciplines are more or

less closer to reality. However the need of art education have been changing from time to time. Certain religions considered it beneficial and admired it where as the others discouraged it and its scope gradually restricted. Even the definition of art has been very controversial and marginalized politically.

[3]In Europe from the time of Plato to this contemporary period numerous philosophies have been evolved from continually. Many of them negated the previous ones, however some of them added on the already articulated philosophies. Most of the philosophies accentuated the education economically beneficial. However religion and spiritualism talked about the education of mannerism, individualism, and anti-materialism. The historical precedence, that this manifesto is adding on, is in between the pragmatism, mannerism, individualism and idealism. Idealism. Individualism and mannerism are more analogical where as pragmatism and scientific realism oppose these. Pragmatism is extremely stressing on delivering the education of material world, and economically beneficial. However their approach to deliver this education is quite creative. The only contradiction is why this approach cannot be used to explain the principles of humanities! That is the point around which this manifesto revolves.

[4]Conservatism and its rival liberalism and socialism are considered most influential socio-political philosophies of the post-Enlightenment era. Conservatism contradicts pragmatism in a way that one is at the right wing and the other is at the left. According to pragmatism the traditional and old practice of teaching is obsolete and must be superseded. On the other hand conservatism has a point of view that sticking to the roots and culture is more important whether it is education or social setup. However the precipitation of the conservatism that, regard experience rather than reason, might be the only similarity.

[5]The philosophical movement pragmatism started in United States of America in late 1800 century. However its roots are much deeper and go back to ancient Greek and European philosophical traditions. Origin of the word pragmatism is Greek which means 'practice' and 'action'. In education pragmatism suggests learning and teaching the things which have practical application.

[6]Pragmatic teachers suggest active project based teaching strategies and focus on topics relevant to students' lives. Its key philosophers are John Dewey, Charles S. Pierce, and William James. However pragmatism also suggests that there is no use of thinking based philosophies. In contrast to idealistic and absolutistic teaching it opposes abstract ideas and concept of facts and truth. This point can be elaborated in such a way that truth is like a whole earth or universe. No one can see the entire earth or universe but a certain part of it. So he describes what he perceive. It will obviously be different from the other, living in a different time and space. But it can't suggest the other narrative is fallacious.

[8]This manifesto adds on the philosophies presented by pragmatism however it doesn't negate the humanism, idealism, individualism, conservatism, positivism, empiricism, and primitivism as well.

Pragmatist approach of learning and teaching is quite innovative. Their philosophy, that education should have a practical implication somewhere in society, is truly fascinating. However to suggest certain disciplines obsolete and abstract looks like an obscure notion. Most of the things which exist today were once an abstract ideas. Almost all of the discoveries and inventions are based on fantasy and fiction. If the essence of pragmatism is followed as a whole it may adjust the learners in a material world successfully but in a long run it will lead to a stagnant society.

[9]This manifesto stresses on giving equal prestige to the disciplines which are considered purely theoretical and philosophical. At the same time we should work on elaborating and enhancing their application in the society rather than deserting and vamoosing them. Every theory and philosophy deserves a proper discourse and experimentation and after that it must be concluded whether it was right or wrong. Even failure leads to new questions and discourse. The purpose of education must not be training hands or a mind. Heart is equally important and most of the humanities and even fine arts are more closer to heart. Most of the humanitarian students find no way to practice or apply their knowledge properly. So a considerable fraction of energy gets stagnant. Our pedagogical system should address this issue and within the premises they should be explicated applicable possibilities of what they are learning.
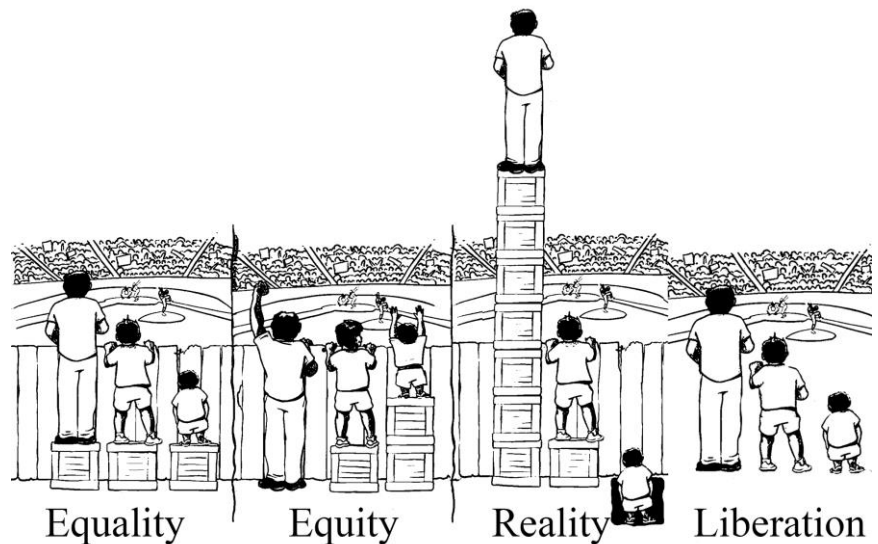
If I suggest activities can be conducted in educational institutes where students think about the possibilities and describe what role they can play after that particular course.

Everybody can not be a doctor or engineer or a programmer. We need to keep previous professions intact and find new professions and skills for the future. And last but not least, Education and politics should be kept separated. Educational institutes should not be treated as raw material fields for factories.

[10]No philosophy is perfect and needs to be added on with the passage of time. The reason is, there is a huge gap between past and future and if I talk about the contemporary period of time, the world is changing rapidly. I agree that there is no absolute truth around us, except the truth of nature e.g. the rising and setting of the sun, the motion of earth, the life and the death etc. However two different persons may have two different truth of the same reality.

The side of coin pragmatism is looking at is true but we can't assume that this is the only side. Possibilities exist. We need to channelize the influx. Project based learning should not be limited to practical disciplines and should be extended to explain philosophies and linguistics as well. If someone feels that in any case his particular discipline can never help him out in his life or he can't make use of it, he must look at the other possibilities as well.

In order to do a particular social betterment some boundaries can also be broken. Collective advantage is more important than the individuals.

Equality   Equity   Reality   Liberation

Citation

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