

## CHAPTER VII

# EDUCATION FOR FREEDOM

### INTRODUCTION

The French Revolution of 1879 was by all accounts not an accident. On the one hand, it was fomented, nourished and raised in the womb of injustice, serfdom and the inequality of the French society of those days. The aristocrats, clerics and landowners enjoyed the wealth and left nothing for the poor majority. Law, medicine, and even theology were reserved for the privileged while prayer and fate were left for the poor. Education was a word as strange as noble, not even heard by peasants and workers. On the other hand, the revolution was stimulated by democratic and enlightened ideas made known to the people by such intellectuals as Charles-Louis Secondat de Montesquieu and Jean Jacques Rousseau. The latter, author of the controversial *Emile* (1762),<sup>1</sup> foresaw such an event, which he judged inevitable, and which he feared: "There is no longer any remedy except a great revolution which would be almost as terrible as the evil which it could heal, which would be a crime to seek to bring about."<sup>2</sup> Equally eloquent, he prophesized in *Emile*: "We are approaching a critical situation, and the century of revolution. I consider it impossible that the monarchies of Europe should be able to endure any longer."<sup>3</sup>

True to his fear, Robert Robespierre, the blood-thirsty executor of the Revolution turned Rousseau's bourgeois humanism (described in *Emile*) into a new ideology of horror. His comrade, Charles Marat, went on to compare the *Contrat Social* to the "bible of revolution." Actually the duo transformed Rousseau's democratic ideal into an ideology of chaos, and his humanist method of education into a method of terror. Napoleon Bonaparte was not completely wrong when the emperor blamed Rousseau, "C'est la faute de Rousseau," for such a bloody revolution that he dreaded so much.<sup>4</sup>

Despite these negative effects, the Revolution of 1789 was unprecedentedly historic, for with it was born a new history for humankind: the era of humanism, freedom and democracy. The whole of France and Europe were transformed, as were their national education systems.

This chapter is intended not as a simple presentation of Rousseau's idea of education, but as a call for the enlightened,

ideology-free education *Emile* implied. Our aim is to defend a pedagogy based on free choice, and on human needs. Such a choice is possible and such needs are fulfilled only if we are conscious of human development and of the obstacles which may hinder such development. The struggle against out-dated ideology, against any form and method of indoctrination, and the search for new ideas guiding our education are most evident in French higher education and, of course, in Rousseau. The revolt of the Paris students in the late 1960s and 1980s, though different in motives and means, reflected this democratic spirit. It is a determination to fight against any kind of negative ideology, either from the right or from the left. This chapter will begin with Rousseau's idea of democratic and humanist education in *Emile* and conclude with our reflection on the present education policy in France.

## EMILE OR HUMANIST EDUCATION

*Emile* appeared fatefully in 1762. Within weeks, the governments and the Church in Paris and Geneva ordered it to be burned by. Like the *Contrat Social*, it was accused of being anti-ideological, anti-clerical, anti-historical and thus, anti-natural. But at bottom, it was his idea of democracy, freedom and humanism that offended his opponents. Such ideas are directed against the old, established structure based on privileges and the myth of divine power. Such new ideas would destroy the monarchies and the Church.

Liked or disliked, *Emile* enjoyed the same celebrity as the *Contrat Social* and swept through France and the whole of Europe like an earthquake. With the *Contrat Social*, it provided the French revolution a formidable weapon: a new ideology of democracy and humanism. Its partisans fought fiercely on the streets, in the salons and more significantly in educational and clerical establishments. The immense influence of *Emile* is reflected in Goethe's humanism and Immanuel Kant's Enlightenment. The German poet proclaimed *Emile* the gospel of all modern teachers, while the speculative thinker was deeply moved by its contents—a rare moment for the philosopher who excluded feelings from his rational system. Even W. Harris, the most fierce opponent of Rousseau who condemned *Emile* as the “greatest heresy in educational doctrine,” had to concede that “apart from *Emile* there could be no understanding of Pestalozzi, Froebel or Basedors, the famous innovators in the history of education.”<sup>5</sup>

The main theses in *Emile* centered on: (1) the autonomy of the educated as the objective of education, (2) humanism as the content of education, and (3) free choice and democratic participation of the educated as its method. As Rousseau articulated in the Preface: "in every kind of project two things have to be considered. The first is the goodness of the project in itself; the second is ease of execution. In the present case, the first question is whether the education I proposed is suitable for mankind, and congenial to the human heart. And is it practicable?"<sup>6</sup> He continued: "First and foremost, he will be a man. All that a man must be he will be when the need arises, as well as anyone else. Whatever the changes of fortune he will always be able to find a place for himself."<sup>7</sup>

In the following, we will delve into these three theses by examining their significance and relevance. More importantly, one has to diagnose Rousseau's solution to the contradiction between the two ideologies of "making a man" and "making a citizen."

### *The Objective of Education*

In the opening section of *Emile*, Rousseau pleaded for a natural education, the aim of which is to make the human as he is. He does not rule out a social education, so long as it does not hinder individual development. The two kinds of education, public and individual (of "making a man" and "making a citizen"), must be chosen between in the case of their incompatibility (as in England where the sacrifice of the individual was demanded), but in the case of their tangible reciprocity (as seen in Geneva), they may be taken together. The last case would be ideal. Though Rousseau seemed to tend toward a national education, eleven years after *Emile*, when he suggested to the King of Poland an education of Polish, patriotic spirit (*Considerations on the Government of Poland*), he was ready to accept the fact that there is always bound to be some loss of individuality in the process by which the child becomes man through a social bringing.<sup>8</sup> Thus, it is clear that the main objective of education is the individual as he argued:

We are born capable of sensation and from birth are affected in diverse ways by the objects around us. As soon as we become conscious of our sensations, we are inclined to seek or to avoid the objects which produce them: at first, because they are agreeable or disagreeable to us, later because we discover that they suit or do not suit us, and ultimately because of the judgments we pass on

them by reference to the idea of happiness, a perception we get from reason. These inclinations extend and strengthen with the growth of sensibility and intelligence, but under the pressure of habit they are changed to some extent with our opinions. The inclinations before this change are what I call our nature. In my view, everything ought to be in conformity with these original inclinations.<sup>9</sup>

He insisted then more strongly: "First and foremost, he will be a man. All that a man must be he will be when the need arises, as well as anyone else. Whatever the changes of fortune he will always be able to find a place for himself."<sup>10</sup>

To justify such an education, Rousseau began with a critique of unnatural education dictated by prejudices, ideologies, authority, etc.:

Prejudices, authority, necessity, example, the social institutions in which we are immersed would crush out nature in him without putting anything in its place. He would fare like a shrub that has grown up by chance in the middle of a road, and got trampled under foot by the passers-by.<sup>11</sup>

Actually, as Rousseau rightly remarked, such prejudices and traditions have always served as the meta-foundation of our traditional education. Here, in Rousseau's own eyes, the mistakes of traditional education come first from its inability to differentiate natural education from communal or civic education, and then, and more importantly, from its confusion in treating man as an external object or thing.

For Rousseau there are three different kinds of education: that of nature, of men and of things. He explained education of nature as the internal development of our faculties and organs, the education of men as the way we make this development possible,<sup>12</sup> while by communal or public education he meant national education<sup>13</sup> as proposed by Plato in the *Republic* that teaches the child to love the nation:

Constantly occupied with Rome and Athens, living as it were with their great men, myself born the citizen of a republic, the son of a father whose ruling passion was the love of his country, I was set on fire by his example.<sup>14</sup>

As a logical consequence of the first mistake, which is seen in its wrong meta-foundation, the second mistake pushes one down toward the world of things. Our educators have taken either an external, divine world or the state to be the objective of education. Consequently, our children are taught to become saints, or patriots, by forcing them to follow strictly the prescribed rules in order to be saints, heroes, ideal models, etc.

Opposing these views, Rousseau maintained that a sound education must be a natural education, the objective of which is the child himself. But the child is not a fixed object like a thing in its immobile environment. The child is growing, and therefore, he must be equipped with proper tools to cope with all matters happening around him<sup>15</sup>

Thus, to educate means to train children "for the hardship they will one day have to endure,"<sup>16</sup> to prepare them to deal with their environment and society: "Harden them to the rigors of the seasons, the climate, the elements. Inure them to hunger, thirst and fatigue. Dip them in the water of styx."<sup>17</sup> The training itself (its method and its forms) must however be changeable too, in accord with the stages of development of the child. The child goes through all the stages of infancy, boyhood, teenage, adolescence and finally, man or womanhood. In each stage, different methods and purposes are required. While in infancy, children need to be taken care of, and need training to develop their own natural capacity. A too protected child could be as spoiled as one that is unprotected. Here, Rousseau took the peasant's capacity and ability in dealing with nature as an example to demonstrate the soundness of his thesis: peasants have very good digestion because they chew dried fruits and crusts. They speak and walk very naturally because they have more natural environments than townsmen.<sup>18</sup> Thus, he concluded that artificial education would bring more damage than benefit: "It is a great disadvantage for them to have more words than ideas and to be able to say more than they think."<sup>19</sup>

Analogously, children have their own world, much different from the adolescent's, and we cannot employ our standard to judge them. It is thus a mistake to mold children into another world rather than their own.

What makes Rousseau's idea revolutionary lies in his emphasis on the child as the ultimate objective of education. In view of this, the methods and scope of education should be changed. One cannot rely on indoctrination or violence, but has to deal directly with the growing child in each of his or her stages of development.

*The Contents of Education*

Evidently, the main points raised by Rousseau in *Emile* and the *Contrat Social* are democracy and humanism in education. William Boyd, the English editor of *Emile* notes:

The big truth in his view, the truth that gives it application to the education of the children of all times and all conditions, is that the educator should take full account of human nature, and especially the nature of the child."<sup>20</sup>

The problem of effecting a reconciliation of the interests of society and the individual with which Rousseau wrestles in the *Emile*, is still with us. It is in fact the problem of democracy, and of the schooling which prepares boys and girls for the democratic way of life; and we all of us are democratic enough to take it for granted that home and school and the adult communities to which we belong should bring personal satisfaction through our membership of them."<sup>21</sup>

The theme of humanism is treated in the context of human nature or the nature of the child. First, by human nature, Rousseau understood not something *a priori* or eternal, but something growing from stage to stage in accord with the environment and one's biological structure. In this sense, a sufficient understanding of human nature could not be based on a certain stage, say, adulthood, or boyhood. Nor do we have the right to treat all stages equally. Each stage is marked by different characteristics and motivated by different interests. From another point of view based on sex, one discovers the same factor: men differs from women and so does their nature: by reason of their sex, they differ in character and temperament, the man being strong and active, the woman being weak and passive. In some sense, Rousseau might be the first educator who applied dynamic psychology to the study of human nature. According to this view then, in order to understand human nature, one needs to take proper account of human nature at its different stages. The difference between child and man, between a child of two years old and the one of 10 years old, between a child and a teenager, etc. must be properly studied. Of course, the answer given by Rousseau to the reason of such difference is till inadequate, and his frequent arguments based upon the mind betray his insistence on the dynamic development of the child. To say that the child's nature is based on

mental self-activity seems to contradict the view that mind itself is made up by a number of separate faculties which appear one after another: sensation in infancy, sense judgments in childhood, practical thinking in the teens, reasoning and abstraction in adolescence, and so on.

However, his inadequate explanation of human nature does not dismiss his main merit: education has to deal with the child in his proper nature, and not with an external, senseless object. Precisely in this lies his humanism.

Second, education has meaning only if it can make the child happy in his world. As we have mentioned briefly, such an insistence on the individual in education appears at first sight to be a contradiction as well as contrary to democratic education. Some critics have taken this issue against Rousseau. Of course, he was well aware of such a problematic which, as he suggested, could be solved with an education similar to that described in Plato's *Republic*:

Having had the good fortune to be born among you, I could not but meditate on the equality nature had conferred on men and the inequality they had created for themselves without thinking of the profound wisdom with which the two had been happily combined in this state. In my search for the best principles, which good sense might prescribe for the constitution of a government I have been so much impressed at finding them all in operation in yours, that even if I had not been born within your walls, I would have felt myself obliged to depict Geneva as the human society outstripping that of all peoples in its advantages.<sup>22</sup>

For Rousseau, democracy must be sought even in education, but not at the cost of individual happiness. The model of the Platonic republic, found in public education in Geneva, was praised by him because, if children are educated as equals, and if they have the laws of the state and the maxims of the general will instilled into them, they will assuredly learn to treat others equally. As such, we do not only achieve a republican education, but can maintain also individual education. He argued classically: "It cannot be left to the individual to be sole judge as to his duties. Still less should children's education be left to the ignorance and prejudice of their fathers. The matter is of far greater concern to the state than to the

fathers.”<sup>23</sup> And he then defended his own position by arguing the need for individual education: “It was not true that children who had been educated in this informal way were left to grow up any way at all. The teachings of the home are that children should be educated, the girls by the mother and the boys by the father.”<sup>24</sup>

### *The Method of Education*

The discovery of dynamic psychology, and of human growth in stages helped Rousseau to search for a new, more adequate method of education. One can say that his method, in his period, is revolutionary in character. It plays on the one hand against any method born in dogmatism, indoctrination, authority or prejudices: “Indoctrination has been always wrong.” On the other hand, he insisted on the self-determined or autonomous role of the educated. Finally, he suggested a natural way in conformity with biological needs and development, with human natural reaction and relation to the external world.

To be more concrete, one may say that Rousseau adopted (1) an empirical method for collecting data and constructing his theory; (2) a method of psychological development to study the different stages of growth in children, and (3) a somewhat behaviouristic method. Needless to say, these methods were not only new, but stood in direct opposition to the previous methods: ideological indoctrination and passive reaction to stimulus.

However, in order to avoid unnecessary controversy over what he called his natural method, one needs to clarify his intention. By the natural way, Rousseau meant a method acquired from the way things happen around us:

This is nature’s way. Why set yourself against it? Do you not see that in attempting to improve on her work you are destroying it and defeating the provision she has made? So long as you do not go beyond the measure of the child’s strength there is less risk in employing it than in husbanding it. Train the children, then, for the hardship they will one day have to endure.<sup>25</sup>

An ideal mother is the one who observes nature and follows it.<sup>26</sup> To go against this by such as the restraint and subjection of human capacity is unnatural: “Life is not just breathing: It is action,



the functioning of organs, senses, faculties, every part of us that gives the consciousness of existence."<sup>27</sup> He described the method of treating infants as unnatural and harmful: "The baby is fastened in swaddling clothes, laid down with head fixed, legs outstretched, arms pinioned, and is prevented from moving by wrappings of cloth and bandages of all kind." And he continued: "The result is that the inner urge to bodily growth finds an insurmountable obstacle in the way of movements that are imperatively needed."<sup>28</sup>

In revoking the shortcomings of traditional education, Rousseau adopted at the same time new ways such as the empirical method: "I have noticed that children are rarely afraid of thunder unless the claps are terrible and actually hurt the ear."<sup>29</sup> Or: "I have lived a great deal among peasants, and I have never spoken of them harshly."<sup>30</sup>

To him, the empirical method, unlike rational argument, is much more natural and precise, and it is easily verified. Such a method is revolutionary since the success of Galileo and Newton, and it is well suitable to education and less ideological.

## THE SPIRIT OF FRENCH HIGHER EDUCATION

The impact of Rousseau on French higher education has been decisive. Francois Marat publicly declared the "sacred" idea of Rousseau and took both the *Contrat Social* and *Emile* to be the modern bible of France. French education has absorbed most if not all the ideas in *Emile*. The French revolution is remembered for its spirit of freedom, equality and fraternity (humanism), carved on all national monuments and even on the churches. In this part, we are concerned with higher education in which Rousseau's ideas are most visible.<sup>31</sup>

### *Humanism*

After the Enlightenment, French education moved toward an education of rationalism, but not yet humanism. The Cartesian spirit was carried on without critique. With it come a new form of individualism based on the principles of autonomy and self-consciousness. With it was born also a new interest: in knowledge that Galileo and Kepler had previously taken to be the sole treasure of humankind. The weight of the ideologues (Cabanis, de Tracy, de Condillac and others) on French politics was remarkable, so that even Napoleon Bonaparte was worried. His dismissal of them as

mere dreamers and ideologues did not help much. The die was cast and since then intellectuals and the bourgeoisie have used their knowledge to try to dictate national education. Aristocrats, clerics and landowners no longer played the upper hand in politics and especially in education, but were forced to deal with the despised liberal bourgeoisie. It is no wonder that after the Revolution, even to the disgust of Napoleon and his court, the trinity of democracy, freedom and equality became the new spirit and syllabus of French education, and with them grew the idea of humanist education. Thus, the academic curriculum was filled with general knowledge about man. Philosophy was required in all high schools and occupied the earlier place of religion.

It is true that the French High-school system is divided into four categories: natural science, technology, humanism and classics resulting in four kinds of Baccalaureats. However, at bottom, it is humanist education which plays the foundational role. In the final year, all students, regardless of category, have to take at least 16 credits of philosophy. The categories of humanism and classics add up to almost 30 credits. Behind philosophy come psychology, sociology, etc. The course of philosophy is mainly taught by the former students of the prestigious *Ecole Normale Supérieure*, which is largely Cartesian by tradition.

Of course, science is not neglected. There is fierce competition for a place at the *Ecole Polytechnique*. And, the mathematical tradition at the University of Paris is cultivated as much as philosophy. However, unlike most American colleges, the *Polytechnique* is more focused on scientific knowledge (and philosophy) than on technology. Jean Capelle observes: "The *Ecole Polytechnique* is in reality a school for higher scientific education: although its students emerge with a title of engineer, they must, if they wish to acquire the technological competence of an engineer, spend another two years in an engineering school which serves as an establishment of applied technology."<sup>32</sup>

## Democracy

In *Emile*, Rousseau insists on the autonomous role of the child, and equally, on general education for all men and women alike. Such an emphasis on free choice and equality gives birth to what we call today democratic education, a term developed by John Dewey in his *Democracy and Education*. Rousseau's aim in extending education to all men is explicit in his ideal of "making citizens." As

a citizen, the student must accept his role as equal among others in the state.

True to his projection, French higher education is more democratic, in terms of quotas and in interests. All students who have passed the Baccalaureat have the right to choose their preferred college, faculty and subject (except the *grandes ecoles* which demand entrance-examinations). The tuition is so low that almost everyone with a “bac” can afford to go to college. Thus, in principle compared to the British and American systems, French higher education is more open, available, and fair to all sexes and races.

One may object to such a free education, or to the self-contradiction in the system of *grandes ecoles*, as do conservatives against the free tuition and loose entrance-regulations, and liberals against the restricted numbers allowed into the *grandes ecoles*. However, one has no doubt about its intention of keeping the system as democratic as possible. The *grandes ecoles* are designed to train the best brains without retarding, or hindering democratic education.

If one looks at French higher education from the angle of administration, one would discover the same characteristics:

- Universities, colleges and faculties preserve their autonomy. The Ministry of Education has little to say about the administration, research and conduct of each school.

- The role of the president of the university is restricted or reduced to a symbolic level while the power of faculty members is kept intact.

- The students have the right of self-organization (political as well as academic). There exists no “Office for Students” run by officials as seen in Taiwanese or American systems.

- University-courses are set up, or designed by the teachers, depending on the specific feature and interests of each institution, and not by central government as in Taiwan or Mainland China.

When one looks at the curriculum of the university, the democratic ideal is most visible. Almost all possible courses relating to humankind could be found at the University of Paris. The university is still a locus for research, and pure science is still attractive. It is also true that quite a few scholars still treat university as an ivory tower, but the university is no longer an isolated island of scholars like Descartes. The traditional definition of university as a community of masters who want to preserve and transmit knowledge

is now revised. Today, the university assumes its social responsibility, taking a leading role in transforming society. It tries to reconcile traditional research with democratic decision making, academic freedom with a sense of responsibility, speculation with active participation. In short, French universities aspire to fulfill Rousseau's dream of reconciling the work of "making a man" and "making a citizen."

### *Modernization or Rationalization*

Regretfully, Rousseau's dream remains a mere dream. The uprising in Paris of students and workers in 1968 was a protest against the policy of education promoted in 1966 by the government of Charles de Gaulle. Similarly, the march of over one million high school and college students in 1986 was another expression of dissatisfaction with the conservative education of Jacques Chirac. De Gaulle and Chirac have opted for the philosophy of "making a citizen" at the cost of that of "making a man," because they found France backward far behind other countries like the United States of America, Great Britain and Germany.

In any case, French education is caught in an embarrassing situation of "to be or not to be." Education for nationalism is as incomplete and dangerous as that for individualism. Democratic education may be sound, but only at the cost of individual freedom and innovation.

In 1971, a committee for revision of the policy of education was set up. Under the supervision of the government, the *Committee of Educational Policy and Planning* prescribed modernization.<sup>3 3</sup> The committee knew too well that France and French citizens would be unable to compete without a radical modernization. The change of method and policy is most visible as was urged in the conclusion of the report:

- more emphasis on educational research, training and the encouraging of talents,
- research and development must be coordinated and directed toward society's needs, and
- professionalisation of teachers.<sup>3 4</sup>

About its policy, one reads:

Item 4 recognizes that henceforth schools should

avoid streaming the top pupils and try to discover and develop individual aptitudes. Item 5 treats formal schooling of the young as the preparation of individuals for a continuing process of education and reeducation. Item 6 emphasizes the role of ideas and knowledge not as elements in a passive culture displayed in conversation and verbal achievement, as was sometimes the case in traditional education, but as instruments by which individuals can, in a disciplined fashion, exercise control over their environments and themselves.<sup>35</sup>

The reasoning behind modernization in French education consists in: first, French education is expected to satisfy students in terms of quality and quantity; second, it has to serve both individual and society; and third, it must pursue new knowledge without losing its democratic essence.<sup>36</sup> Such objectives, though ideal, are too ambitious and in some cases, self-contradictory as reflected in the student unrest. However, the main reason is French education could not yet find a middle way harmonizing collective ideology (nationalism, i.e. "making a citizen") and individual freedom (individualism, i.e. "making a man").

## CONCLUSION

As we have admitted at the beginning of this chapter, our aim is the rather modest one of showing that a sound education must be both ideological and anti-ideological, as seen in Rousseau's *Emile* - anti the negative ideology and pro the positive one.

By an education of positive ideology, we mean an education of good, not reactionary or negative, ideas; ideas which reflect reality and can help solve our problems. However, any ideology which is based not on eternal truth and absolute values will turn out to be negative in the course of historical development. This is so of an ideological education, which therefore needs to be criticized and rejected in the long run. This is called anti-ideological education, or an education for freedom.

In the first chapter, we explained ideology in its genetic process and showed that, in its first stage, ideology is necessary for understanding, preserving and constructing reality. It is useful in solving our problems as seen in practical and even pure science. However, we strongly warned that it is negative, reactionary and

harmful in the second stage, because it can no longer respond to the change of our life-world.<sup>3 7</sup>

Rousseau had executed exactly and well such an education. In the first stage, he objected to the traditional, dogmatic and obsolete education which he found incompatible to his "new" world. In the second stage, he introduced a new ideology of democracy, freedom and humanism which could deal with the problems of the modern age.

Similarly, one can say that French higher education is both ideological and anti-ideological. It tries very hard to build a sound education on the basis of the humanism, freedom and democracy proposed by Rousseau. But it criticizes itself whenever it no longer fits the modern world and modern men. It is ready for any possible change, to accept new ideology and to reject the old one. However, such an education could not solve the problems once interests are involved in conflict: intellectual interest versus material interest, individual versus collective, equal versus natural and genial.

The example of present the mediocre character of research of French universities shows that democratic education has backfired: it does not progress further, but hinders progress. In 1966, the Education Commission confessed that France no longer had the ability to win a Nobel Prize in Physics,<sup>3 8</sup> and that the once prestigious *Sorbonne* had degenerated into a third class University of Paris, which serves as the haven for aimless students. It has lost the sense of a community of research and of learned men.

The question: how to preserve the ideology of democracy, equality and freedom without sacrificing progress and success is thus the most serious issue; it is posed not only to France but for us all.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Emile*, trans. and ed. William Boyd (New York, 1956).

<sup>2</sup> Karl Loewith, *From Hegel to Nietzsche* (New York: Holt, 1964), p. 238. See also Karl D. Erdmann, *Das Verhaeltniss von Staat und Religion nach der Sozialphilosophie Rousseaus* (Berlin, 1955).

<sup>3</sup> Loewith, p. 238.

<sup>4</sup> M. Kircheisen, *Napoleons Gespraech* (Stuttgart, 1913), p. 195; quoted by Loewith, p. 431.

<sup>5</sup> *Emile*, Foreword by Lawrence A. Gremin.

- <sup>6</sup> *Emile*, pp. 6-7.
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, Epilogue of W. Boyd, p. 170.
- <sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.
- <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11; Boyd, p. 181.
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13; Boyd, p. 182.
- <sup>14</sup> Boyd, p. 182.
- <sup>15</sup> *Emile*, pp. 12-13.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 25-27.
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.
- <sup>20</sup> Boyd.
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>22</sup> Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality*, in Boyd, pp. 182-188.
- <sup>23</sup> *Emile*, p. 154.
- <sup>24</sup> Boyd, p. 89.
- <sup>25</sup> *Emile*, pp. 17-18.
- <sup>26</sup> *Emile*, p. 17.
- <sup>27</sup> *Emile*, p. 15.
- <sup>28</sup> *Emile*, pp. 15-16.
- <sup>29</sup> *Emile*, p. 23.
- <sup>30</sup> *Emile*, p. 27.
- <sup>31</sup> W. R. Fraser, *Education and Society in Modern France* (London: Routledge-Kegan Paul, 1963); H. C. Barnard, *The French Tradition in Education* (Cambridge, 1922); W. D. Halls, *Education, Culture and Politics in Modern France* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1976).
- <sup>32</sup> Jean Capelle, *Tomorrow's Education. The First French Experience* (Oxford, 1967), pp. 188-189.
- <sup>33</sup> Committee of Educational Policy and Planning (OCED), *Review of National Policies to Education* (Paris, 1971). As a matter of fact, French education has been under permanent revision; it changes much more than its counterpart in Great Britain or in Germany.
- <sup>34</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 101-108.
- <sup>35</sup> *ibid.*, p. 103.
- <sup>36</sup> The position of Paul Ricoeur. See Paul Ricoeur, *Lectures in Ideology and Utopia*, ed. and introduction by H. Taylor (New

York: Columbia University Press, 1986).

<sup>37</sup> Tran Van Doan, "Reflection on the Nature of Ideology," *The Asian Journal of Philosophy*, 2-1 (1990), pp. 105-150; re-published as chapter 1 in this volume.

<sup>38</sup> Actually, France has won only a few Nobel Prizes in Physics. The last French Nobel Prize in Physics was awarded in 1991.



## POSTSCRIPTS

Since this monograph aims at a critique of ideological education, it makes no attempt to work towards a new kind of ideology, nor to find a definite solution to the problem. It tries to stay as objective as possible (but it does not claim to be fully neutral), even at the risk of falling into the trap of rationalism. Thus, it would be difficult to arrive at a conclusion. This postscript takes the place of a conclusion with a double aim: to respond to the critiques raised by a great number of friends, colleagues, interested scholars and students on some major issues on ideological education, and to express our own feeling about our present education system.

Work on this monograph began at a time when there was no hope for a democratic, humanist and rational education in sight, when such an idea existed only in Western textbooks, and when most educators preferred to side with the ruling class or to play safe by hiding in an ivory-tower. Some chose the Taoist way by burying their heads in utopian schemes and dreaming of being butterflies. This work was written, chapter by chapter and unsystematically, in fear and despair. The span of years since then is marked by scars of dread, despair, joy, hope and euphoria as history started to change, either moving forward or retreating backward into the tunnel of darkness.

It seemed that spring finally came, and that the hirondelles returned singing Beethoven's *Ode to Joy* when martial law was lifted some years ago, when the iron curtain imposed by Mao and his comrades fell and when the gate to freedom was opened up at Peking University. All educators shared the feeling of the peasant dancing and praising the return of hope after the tempest in the *Pastoral*.

However, the euphoria was extinguished just before reaching its climax, and died prematurely before we were aware of the significance of such an event. The brutal massacre in *Tiananmen* and the continuing violent round-ups of those who seek freedom testify that ideological education is not yet dead, but still arrogantly imposes its terror and dogmatism on the whole people. On both sides of the Straits, the authorities continued to rely on it, trying harder by inventing new techniques and by building up the myth of ideas. They make sure that the students will love their "nation" and worship their "leaders." They will take care of the so-called prodigal sons by brainwashing them, and stuffing them with all kinds of

patriotic slogans. Thus, any action or reaction which may endanger the authority of ideology will be severely punished.

However, my hope is not yet shattered, for there are many reasons to believe in a revolutionary change for the better in education. Against the wish of the rulers, the tragedy of *Tiananmen* will encourage the young intellectuals to wake up from the “dream of the red chamber” and to take their fate in their own hands. The growing political openness will be followed by an openness of mind; economic liberation will be accompanied by a certain emancipation of mankind. Thus, I firmly believe that a critique of ideological education could play a significant role in breaking the ice of dogmatism and *naivete*, in challenging authoritarianism and traditionalism, and in opening our minds to a newly self-consciousness world.

This monograph is far from complete or perfect. Even before its publication, some of its ideas have been subjected to criticism and challenge. I am certainly grateful for such encouragement. In the following lines, I wish to reply to some criticism which I consider helpful for an understanding of ideology in general, and ideological education in particular.

Replying to my talk in Seoul on the crisis of values in a Confucian society and to my suggestions of using the economic model to understanding social crisis, Professor Alain Touraine of the University of Paris, as well as Professor Noah Samuel Eisenstadt of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, were more skeptical of the economic approach. They found in the economic model the danger of reductionism, which is not only incomplete, but dangerous in understanding the complexity of society. I agree with them that the economic model reflects only basic human activities, and that the economic laws solve only the problems arising from the conflict of such activities. However, I still stress its basic structure—of course, not totally as does Marx—because I share Giambattista Vico’s view that it is the economic activity which can solve the most basic human needs and hence its basic problems. In other words, I discover in the economic model a certain form of ideology with its positive elements. Consequently, I could not wholeheartedly accept the Marxist interpretation of ideology as some negative, false instrument or fabricated consciousness by the dominant class due to its one-sidedness. That is the reason for my revision of the first chapter on the nature of ideology with the intention of implementing Marx’s understanding of ideology. This chapter was revised after my three presentations of its version in Hongkong (The Chinese University),

Taipei (Academia Sinica) and London (Institute of Education, University of London). I learned with agreeable surprise from colleagues that my idea is very close to those of Clifford Geertz and Paul Ricoeur.

Of course, this chapter is not immune from criticism, friendly and hostile. Professor Richard Knowles of Duquesne University reminded me of the difficulty in demarcating the correctness from the incorrectness of ideology. Actually, I followed Kant's method and tried to construct a list of criteria after the version of Kant's table of categories, and applied them to distinguish right from wrong ideology. I found later that such a rationalist approach tends more to confuse than to clarify the ambiguity of ideology. It is of less use than Kant might have believed for understanding human problems.

The most ardent and constructive critique came from Professor Vincent Shen of the National Chengchi University, now of the Lee Chair of Chinese Philosophy and Culture at the University of Toronto. His critique of my earlier understanding of ideology (when I was influenced by Marx) has helped me to reflect on Marx's own position and to discover Marx's mistakes. Though I still cling to my old view that most ideologies tend to be conservative and therefore reactionary, I have to admit that even ideology has constructive elements in itself. My study of Hans-Georg Gadamer confirms the view that ideology cannot be abolished, simply because it forms a part of tradition. Thus, what we can do is to implement or transform it. Man cannot afford to live without ideology, just as man could not be human without tradition, i.e., memory of the past.

I learned a great deal from Professor George F. McLean of the Catholic University of America, who improved my work with his critical remarks. On occasion, he would indirectly remind me of my dubious stand with regards to the metaphysical foundation of education. I am aware of the fact that my strong objection to any form of determinism, and my inadequate dealing with the metaphysical foundation of education would make this work less fruitful. With Professor McLean, I believe in the factor of freedom as the meta-foundation overcoming determinism. I see this as metaphysics, the recognition that reality is primarily free within which is found the material and determined. Human beings are bound by all kind of interests, among them is the interest in freedom. That is what differs man from animals, and helps man to become God-like.

There were other criticisms in London, Toronto and Kyoto, which I took to heart. There were invaluable suggestions and corrections from my colleagues and friends during my first years of

apprenticeship in Innsbruck. Dr. Hanjo Sauer spent precious time polishing my first article on education, which was later published in one volume in Munich. I shall never forget Dr. Hermann Gmeiner, the founder of the *SOS Kinderdorf International*, with whom I worked for a short time in Austria. His idea of giving children a sense of human dignity still impresses me today.

This monograph is certainly not immune from mistakes and its suggestions may become irrelevant in the future. Likewise, the business of ideological critique may have a long way to go, just as our ideological education will not easily fade away. Yet in this tumultuous period of rapid change, I believe such efforts have a valued role in exposing destructive ideologies and promoting human solidarity.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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