

RE: BLM / COVID/ EDUCATION:

"Suppose the immigrants were left to their own inspirations, and instead of public schools should find only private institutions; everything would be different: each person would keep up his own custom or preferences; each group would constitute itself separately preserve its own language, traditions, religious customs, its old national spirit, and its prejudices. without fusions of Races, without a uniform language, without equality of social classes, without reciprocal toleration among the different denominations, and, above all, without an ardent love for the new country and its institutions, would the United States still be United?"

- Ferdinand E. Buisson, Report of the French Commission on American Education, 1879, as quoted in Education in the United States: a Documentary History

I came across this quote and a number of others like it while researching the historic roots of education in the united states. It is interesting (and scary) to note that the primary purpose of schools was to inculcate culturally nationalistic ideals of uniformity into immigrants. And I think it fair to say this is still the primary mechanism of schools.

As for higher education, other quotes would show that preeminent thinkers which helped form our colleges as we know them today explicitly acknowledged that the purpose of these schools was to DISSEMINATE knowledge far more than advance it (this is a peripheral function). As a graduate student who is all too familiar with how graduate school can amount to studying all the same things you've already covered and from the same starting point – only this time at a slightly deeper level yet still in the most fragmented and dogmatic fashion as everyone else (and this is how people are spending a good portion of their 20's which neurological is their brains prime years) –, I think it fair to say our educational system has held hostage the advancement of knowledge.

On a slightly separate note, in reading Thomas Picketty's 'Capitol and Ideology' he details how education, while it is often quoted in the words of Horace Mann to be the 'Great equalizer', has in fact been a tremendous source of inequality among people in at least one way; ivy league colleges, for which a wealthy child is as much as x60 more likely to admitted than a poor one. These people go onto dominate our top political positions and/ or become some of the highest earners in the nation. But how and why does this occur? Why does having an ivy league education grant someone such an advantage – such a reputation? The answer largely has nothing to do with the quality of education, but rather the IN PERSON connections someone is likely to obtain when going to a place that is practically designated for rich people to mingle with other rich kids. It is the connections one is able to make which gives these institutions so much power that has been used to date to perpetuate inequality.

While I'll be in the process of using what free time I have to write another long essay for a while to come, my point as it relates to momentous events here and now is twofold:

- 1) We should use this opportunity to evolve our educational systems. While my thoughts are still developing on this along with my research, I think the mobilization (letting it go online) is a good start. For college, as someone who recently lost a father which school took me away from in his last year, I say it is a parasitic breakdown in the principles of labor (human activity) that one need to 'choose' between being where they call home/ with those they love vs. going somewhere far off just to become qualified to participate in a job market that is depriving those without an education of leverage to obtain skillful/ satisfying/ mobile/ gainful employment.

As education becomes more essential to a 'knowledge economy' we'd do well to consider one basic principle about the economic principles of competition, namely that employers can usually capitalize on competition between employees, but the reverse is not often true – least not when the competition between employers is between states and when workers lack mobility. An example would be a large factory which has competitors that are based in other states; the employer – if based in any large city – has thousands of workers in the local area to choose from. If any of them don't like their terms then there is likely someone willing who will do the job for less. But unless the worker wants to move to another state, they don't have the same bargaining leverage as the large factory employer does.

Mobility = leverage.

If education is going to become a prerequisite to getting a good job then it makes sense we begin to treat it as a consumable commodity in which we are to be treated as CONSUMERS who seek such a thing as CONSUMER LEVERAGE. This is a thing that government regulation does effect, and though this is more of an appropriate topic for an essay, suffice it to say that people don't see themselves as consumers and so the end outcome is much more likely to be that they are not treated as such.

- 2) As it relates to BLM and the general concepts of healing communities at their source and/ or cultural minorities being forced to live a 'white man's world' – schools are one of, if not *the* primary institutions through which people are [by law] required to allow their children to be indoctrinated into a cultural hegemony. The mere fact that so many parents and students cannot seem to fathom any way to have a sense of community without in-person schools only shows how institutionalized we've become.

Worse than this is the thought that, while COVID may be getting overhyped, what happens to us in the future if we fail to evolve now? We are being crammed into urban centers at rates unprecedented in human history, and we're becoming increasingly reliant on bloated/ centralized educational institutions in which children swap germs by the thousands. What

happens then when a more serious virus catches us with our pants down? What happens to a species it fails to evolve when mother nature gives it warning shots?

.... Points 1 and 2 considered, I think it fair to say our mediation institutions/ community spaces in which we do more than learn but in which we socialize, and through which we are socialized – our very concept of these places needs to evolve. And nobody said evolution is or should be easy (although I think many are sort of enjoying this in a way). Parents, though they have it rough, are not above the need to adapt (again, after already having adapted to life with a child in our current way of doing things)...yes, it sucks, but a little pain in the short run might pay off in the long run.

While I don't presume the ideas I present on my website are directly applicable to more than homeless, I only say this because I think things need to/ will progress to get much more 'pressured' before such a fundamental leap as questioning the sanctity of private property will take place – least on any large scale. But I maintain that middle class may still benefit from my own proposals in the sense that now more than ever they need to realize that they are not an island. 150 yrs. Ago the middle class didn't even exist; they were invented in response to industrialization – a process which forced them to learn to develop safeguards from powerful entities that would have them acting against their own interests. As somewhat of a byproduct of this, they also learned to lean on the government as a tool to insulate them from the inconvenience of learning to deal with/ rely upon lower classes, e.g. public school provide them daycare while sheltering their children from the supposedly negative influences of peasant classes. Now however – as both COVID and technology are in some ways taking down the very mechanisms of the industrial revolution – the middle class ought to re-learn how to live in an inter-dependent society, and this is a thing I do think some of my own ideas are applicable to.

But the evolution of community [not private] spaces is a thing that is here and now. How it will go is a thing for which many peoples' guess is as good as mine at this point. But I do have a few words on it at this early stage of my endeavor.

We need to adjust our tax dollars towards funding people who want to get paid to think for a living (teachers) to be able to do so, thereby allowing a healthy separation between the conflict of interest that is so prevalent in higher education, namely that teachers/ researchers are required to lecture students as part of their job. It is surprising how some of the most supposedly objective researchers on education won't acknowledge the white elephant(s) in the room; students don't actually NEED a lecture (least not a classroom based one), it is a relevant thing to consider that teachers do need/ want job security, and it is a DEGREE students pay for more than it is to LEARN anything.

Just as what is strictly essential to survival cannot explain the economies we create (because we are lavish consumers), so too would strictly considering what is essential to learn utterly fail to explain our educational systems. One thing apparent at this early stage of my research is the plain fact that education has been on an unsustainable path in terms of funding for decades – how much

more so now that COVID transpired? There is a more efficient, a more effective, and a more self-determined means to achieve our ends, but it has been held hostage, both because higher education facilitates an outdated purpose – one which transcends the mere act of learning –, and because teachers need to get paid (preferably they would like to do something they enjoy, and enjoyable work ought to be considered a right not a privilege).

Paying numerous people every year to present ideas that have already been written (often more clearly) in a book and for which a single lecture can be transcribed to a disc then mass produced is inefficient and indoctrinating. Similar to how peasants in the industrial revolution were induced to forfeit the autonomy and the traditional cultures that they possess on a rural farm in favor of being roped into large, culturally progressive cities that were full of factories in which a manager might oversee every little thing they do (See my essay ‘Principle of Organization’ for the Russian example) – this is surprisingly analogous to the act of learning via a lecture that is given by a teacher at a set time and in a ‘one size fits all’ social setting.

Finally, consider how human relations have come to be treated as a commodity (a thing I talked much about in my ‘Synopsis’). Colleges are a huge culprit in this, and it is getting worse. They sell the college experience not just books and lectures. Being as college enrollments are only going to increase, we really need to be mindful of how utterly stupid (and dangerous) it is to rely on educational institutions as one of our primary cultural outlets.

Beyond that I think people need to come up with their own ideas. How k-12 will cope and evolve is a thing I have little in the way of input on, but will be interested to see what people come up with. My primary point in all this is to direct the readers attention to what a powerful idea educational reform is and what a prime opportunity is before us.

- Wayne Wignes