Panem et Informationem:
Toward Inspired Responsibility

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Abstract

Starting by addressing the present global crisis and the issue of how we think, this paper proposes an approach that attends to the vital interests of humanity. International institutional powers and the media aligned with them are steering public discourse about the global crisis predominantly between threat-creating means on the one hand, and distraction, on the other, along the lines of narrowly defined and biased interests. Both tugs, however, vie for public approval – the first by soliciting endorsement for global interventions and the other by appeasing via diversion. As the inhabitants of the developed and trend-setting centers oscillate between mobilization and distraction, the greater part of humanity exists in deprivation of both sustenance and basic understanding of the issues that are decided upon in their name and, most often, at their expense. The global issues at stake are calling for an alteration not only of our material conditions but also, and most importantly, for a transformation of our consciousness which has the capacity to envision and create comprehensive changes. In that name, this paper calls for transformation and redistribution of wisdom, wealth, and well-being by subverting the intimidation-distraction governance pole, starting here from reforming the Roman notion of Bread and Games (panem et circenses) into a call for Bread and Information. Furthermore, the pun effectively brings into the discussion two crucial issues of our times which are critical for our future, those of agriculture and food production on the one hand, and of literacy and information distribution on the other.

1. Between Punishment and Reward: Catastrophizing, Distraction and Slow Violence

The insight offered here is as much a proposal for addressing critical issues at hand as it is a critique of the way we present problems and questions, which does not so much invite an observant response but induces a reaction. The concern at stake is that the notion of crisis (financial and otherwise), planetary catastrophe, and the state of emergency are posited in terms which demand immediate mobilization. Presentment of crises is of such grand scale and wide scope, such general nature that we hear over and over again from academic podiums to newsstands, to pulpits alike (and they do resemble each other increasingly in terms of the fear-inducing methods and threat-creating means) that these are terrible times we live in. This in and of itself presents a crisis and a crisis of possible dialogues, and it seems to be leading to increased and increasingly uneven enforcement of global regulations – a justification for planetary disciplining and monitoring along uneven axes of power and responsibility.

I want to consider representation of crisis as a presentment, to which we are ineluctably summoned, and start from there as a point of departure to see if we can look forward to more hopeful ways of engaging people without threatening them into action. In that sense, this is a call for and toward a change in the way we communicate critical issues. A change is needed in the paradigm of public interaction that has always resorted to inflaming threat and conditioning people to react and act only between the poles of reward or punishment and only to the most explosive issues of the day. Mobilizing people by fear is an act of aggression; repeated catastrophizing about our terrible modernity leads to militantism, panic, despair, or numbness – what Ian Angus has recognized as lapsing into Indifference or resorting to Fundamentalism.[1] Furthermore, focusing primarily and aggressively on critical issues of spectacularly catastrophic events also underestimates and neglects various forms of what Rob Nixon calls "slow violence,"[2] a gradual and unregistered violence, particularly on the bodies of the poverty-stricken, which has a long term effect and whose detrimental significance is revealed only over time.

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Starting by addressing the present crisis and the issue of how we think, this assessment subsequently proposes an approach that attends to the vital interests of humanity. International institutional powers and the media aligned with them are steering public discourse about global crisis predominantly between threat-creating means on the one hand, and distraction, on the other, along the lines of narrowly defined and biased interests. Both tugs, however, vie for public approval – the first by soliciting endorsement for global interventions and the other by appeasing via diversion. Most importantly, both pulls are serving predetermined means of engagement thus not only limiting and controlling our capacities to invent and enact multiple and different approaches to the critical issues but also limiting who can actually respond on such preset terms. However, what should be recognized here is the powerful influence of the general public as state apparatuses; governments, political figures, and political alliances are increasingly anxious about public opinion, public exposure, and public backing. Particular stress should be put exactly on such vulnerability of systems of overpowering. Additional encouragement should be given to people to realize their capacities to influence and shape social realities and to self-organize around vital issues. As the inhabitants of the developed and trend-setting centers oscillate between mobilization and distraction, the greater part of humanity exists in deprivation of both sustenance and basic understanding of the issues that are decided upon in their name and, most often, at their expense. The global issues at stake are calling for an alteration not only of our material conditions but also, and most importantly, for a transformation of our consciousness which has the capacity to envision and create comprehensive changes. Such course necessitates an essential change in values and requires the formulation of a new cultural environment based on those changes. In that name, this paper calls for transformation and redistribution of wisdom, wealth, and well-being by sub-

verting the intimidation-distraction governance pole, starting here from reforming the Roman notion of Bread and Games (panem et circenses) into a call for Bread and Information.

2. Bread and Information

Re-considered here as common sense and basic needs, Bread and Information are also taken up as aspects of the most critical issues currently at stake. They primarily refer to Agriculture and Literacy (multiple forms of literacy) – bare minimums sustaining us as physical and political bodies respectively. Furthermore, they are vital concerns that share the characteristics and history of slow violence. The consequences of their deficiencies or misuse can be witnessed only after a significant amount of time passes and may be grossly neglected till dire conditions prevail. Together they combine what we know to be the greatest challenge for the future of growing humanity and our environment and what we know to be the greatest innovation of our time. The two have been distinctly marked by the struggle to increase food production in order to accommodate population with basic nutrition that sustains us in the world on the one hand, and the fight for the control over representation that informs our worldview and determines our place in and our relationship to the world, on the other. Both agriculture and information technology have been expanding tremendously with proliferation which has been an advantage and a major challenge. As such, they are the primary domains of our responsibility – to feed people literally and politically in order to provide, support, and build up the basic foundation for equal physical comfort and socio-political growth of each and every human.

Technologies for greater food production have been radically developed to maximize yields. We have been able to provide never-seen-before amounts and varieties of foods. However, hunger is still devastating populations even in the countries which are able to feed their own. Paradoxically, the type of food provided in the developed countries has gone full circle from the outburst of the modified and heavily processed to the much demanded return of the organically grown, thus bringing the nutritional awareness of the developed economies closer to the traditional necessities of the smaller, underdeveloped markets. Conversely, as the evergrowing speed of information sharing is dramatically increasing, so is the gap between the literate and illiterate both in traditional as well as in the new technological terms. However, the new technologies have multiple capacities to actually bring up the illiterate to current pace much faster than ever before because of their interactive and powerful audio-visual nature. The challenge here is the accessibility and affordability of the hardware, software, and services as well as the channeling of the information (learning what and how to read selectively and with particular focus) so as to manage potential blurring and overload. Furthermore, information technology if made even more widely accessible has the capacity to increase knowledge exchange not only by connecting certified experts from all over the globe but also, and particularly, by training the poverty-stricken to share their survival strategies and we have yet to recognize and learn from their ingenuity. By raising awareness both about forms of literacy necessary and about forms of food production demanded, the intent here is neither to threaten nor to divert but to seek out ways of inviting action from a safe and informed place. What is sought here with the optimistic appraisal of the capacities of both agricultural and informational technologies is inspiration via information rather than intervention; neither assertion nor distraction but attraction.

3. Reconfiguring the Language, Rearranging Desires

Toward such hopeful responsibility we begin by reassessing our own positions as researchers, thinkers, experts, and activists. The concern here is of epistemological nature and deals with the ways we construct our objects of knowledge; as such, it is attentive to a series of initial questions. Do we present and stage crisis in certain ways so as to amplify a sense of urgency and posit ourselves as the solution-bearers, a redemptive intellectual force? Is this a cognitive bias? To what extent do we do this? Do we take into account that creative thinkers bring about crisis as a critical point of creation? How do we, then, precipitate the critical point for re-creation? How do we re-think about crisis as a contrast stimulating positive and creative engagement? How do we inform but not inundate? How can we understand our own position within systems of knowledge which condition our ways of thinking about the world? In other words, how are we participating in staging and invoking crisis because we operate within dominant systems which have determined our relation to it already?

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Crises need to be rethought and re-focused from a breaking point and emergency to a turning at which we realize that recoveries, regenerations, and reinventions hinge upon and start from the attitude which we choose now. At the shrill call for attention, can we respond without inducing panic attacks, depression, and resignation that will only exacerbate problems in the long term? The other side of crisis is to be considered as that which creativity stages and brings about and has the potential to open up spaces for stimulated ingenuity. When we catastrophize in our speeches and our research, aren't we acting in sensational ways? Aren't we amplifying tremendously a sense of doom? Aren't we reproducing the apocalyptic narrative much like the institutionalized religions in order to terrify people into expansion? Such sense of threat only increases the need for greater surveillance, greater consumption and resource-grabbing in the developed countries and pillaging of the struggling countries of the South, which have been treated as the global dumping-ground. Further, such presentments bring about a conception of environmentalism which dictates and purifies along the axis of power again; greater gated-community construction; and an overall depletion of spirit. How do we balance such representational violence by expanding ways in which we register and address different aspects and forms of aggression such as "slow violence," the less perceptible but long-term devastations?

During the Cold War tension, Martin Luther King spoke of it as the time of guided missiles and misguided men. In our contemporary moment, we can, quite similarly, end up with numerous means, strategies, resources, and technologies, but without guiding people in the complexities, paradoxes, and consequences of their beliefs that in turn determine the use of those means, we can end up with hit and miss outcomes, haphazard and detrimental results,

as well as accidental and short-lived celebrations, pyrrhic victories. I find in education, particularly in the interdisciplinary training in critical skills which Humanities can offer, the key component and a powerful means of engaging people and inspiring their action regarding planetary concerns. In the modern abundance of fast-flowing information, we find the following issues affecting possibilities of general public engagement and activism: the questions of the direction of the flow, the control and the dissemination of, and the access to information. The goal is to create a dramatically greater access to information worldwide, open up multidirectional channels of information flow, and multiply democratic means of informing. All this is intended to evolve further the awareness of humanity about the hindrances as well as possibilities of its growth and expansion. The means are meant to be educating and informing without terrorizing because we cannot terrify anybody into expansion, and the goal is individual expansion rather than extension of global control – expansion rather than coercion which has a short-term effect and only results in having to re-invent means of mere damage control in the long run.

How can we globally ensure that information about individual rights and responsibilities is disseminated in ways that introduce and circulate new perspectives of understanding and also develop social systems that can support individual decision-making? Human needs and desires are the most powerful drivers and we know that we inherently desire ever-greater things. Along those lines, Gayatri Spivak calls for the uncoercive re-arranging of desires[3] as a way of re-directing our focuses on the most critical concerns of global well-being. Of utmost importance here would be to develop means of recognizing what is critical to one in relationship to another on all levels of social organizing. Then, we create multiple alignments of our human preoccupations and needs and invest personal energies in the understanding of the interconnectedness and interdependence of our microecologies, supporting them by thusly-conceived action toward greater good for a greater number of people. By re-focusing the desires of the people toward well-being in all aspects of their human condition, which is of intrinsically relational and social nature, rather than amassing and hoarding only the material, we would have people and communities coalesce around commonalities and values they are willing to work and stand up for.

Spivak points out that only capital and information globalize – everything else is damage control.[4] Into what will we invest our capital then? About what will we be informing? It seems that we should start from putting capital in informing about the ways in which capital and consumerism have been directed so far and got us here, for the sake of broadening and developing critical perspectives, intellectual and innovative resources, and action-propelling awareness.

4. Deconstructing Control, Deactivating Crisis

Every regime, state control apparatus, and indoctrinating system always has within it the mechanism of its own deconstruction and deactivation. They are forced to face their systemic insufficiency and instances of impotence at the very moment of their greatest exertion of power. That is when they are at their most critical – they find out that controlling people can only go so far until it produces a counter reaction. We have been learning in the neoliberal, capitalist societies that rather than enforce direct control the most efficient means of controlling becomes indulging certain desires or creating desires (marketing systems are ex-

perts that way). Understanding this, we can start from creating new and different desires which are already present in human potential. The greatest power lies not in controlling others into submission to one's will but in gathering, motivating, and being awarded people's support and following of their own inspired volition. Liberalism would then create conditions, actualize itself that is, for the quickening of the self-governing capabilities of individuals.[5] Liberalism is thus not an eradication of control but reconfiguration, redistribution, and transfer of power. The question of control in governance is not necessarily relinquished especially as it is the underpinning logic of organization at multiple levels of social organizational scales. And yet, control as

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governing conduct and action can be re-directed, reformed, re-envisioned so they can stem from the volition and self-directing of the very socio-political subjects in the social structures they inhabit. With such internalization of social authority and the knowledge that the sharing individual is a happier individual, with a deeply seated need for community (sharing in communication and communion – partaking of bread and information), we can re-focus people's desires toward means which will support both their need to connect and share and their will to self-motivated decision and action.

Crises as critical points of decision-making may never be eradicated. But much like control of the exerted power, they have within them a possibility of their alleviation and refinement of solutions. We can choose our battles wiser indeed; we can transform crises into contrasts that give rise to inspired rather than desperate decision-making. Most importantly, we can choose what kind of mentality, attitude, and mindset we can apply in times of crises so as to alleviate the anguish and proceed with reinvigorated stamina and recharged motivation. We choose in our personal lives and organizational appointments the kind of intellectual and emotional attitude to engage around crises so as to model them and allow them to creatively reverberate with and resonate into the public spheres we are attempting to influence. Contrast, likewise, is a valuable means of discernment; it causes us to define our aspirations. Human spirit is capable of replenishment as well as achieving greatest feats out of greatest despair.

5. Poverty-Stricken, not Poor: From Struggle to Ingenuity

People who are on the margins are, in fact, the ones who are at this very moment out of their contrast and disadvantage shouting high-pitched calls and creating most resolute and specific desires that will be the compelling energy setting future courses. In terms of catastrophizing, it is fascinating to examine the film industries of the privileged countries as representational indicators of social conditions and cultural climates. Catastrophic films predominantly come from developed countries, who can afford to indulge in fantasizing about grand events that would shake them up and revive the intensity of life. Filmic stories of inspiration and hope largely come from the places of challenge and struggle. People who face catastrophes in actuality happen to learn how to savor and value life one day at a time. How is it that the index of national happiness happens to be the highest in what we thought were under or undeveloped countries – what is there to be learned from what to us appears as their demise? What is it in the developed countries that ultimately causes the depletion of excitement and exhilaration and becomes an epidemic of depression, such as in the U.S.

which has positioned itself as the global uber-power? What is there to be learned in exchange of perspectives and reconfiguration of the basis of wisdom, wealth, and well-being?

Index of national happiness can be significantly high in certain countries of Africa, while the continent has long been an actual and symbolic repository, dumping ground, and experimental arena of the colonizers and modern neo-colonizers of all sorts. It has also been a favorite humanitarian project. Whether by disparaging its development or by aiding it, oftentimes in pursuit of our own redemptive role of "self-appointed moral entrepreneurs,"* Africa has been repeatedly patronized, abused, and degraded. What is necessary is support in empathy and cooperation in reciprocity at multiple levels. The ones that are in need of support should be approached with respect and acknowledgement of their intrinsic dignity – that they are there in a co-creative manner and that there are invaluable understandings they have acquired in their times of need. By increasing and evolving re-distribution of knowledge, power, wealth and well-being, we open up multiple pathways of learning among different worldviews, among different parts of the world, and among our own internal aspects. Sheer survival drive makes virtue out of necessity and triggers ingenuity; it keeps it on its toes to pulse vitally in times of critical need, struggle, and strife. The ones on the margins thus compensate for the lack of political say and power by developing inventive survival strategies and tremendous creativity.

Historical examples that continue to change the world come from the women's struggle for equality and their existential resilience; from the political and cultural heritage of Black Americans; from the adaptive capacities of immigrants; from the worldviews of interconnectedness and spiritual imperatives of Native Americans, to name just a few. The creative magnitude of the Aborigine or the Inuit, for example, is yet to be recognized along with the terrible injustices and harms done to them, by which we shorthand and undercut ourselves in the long run. Furthermore, incorporation of the traditional knowledge and resourcefulness into new advents and discoveries is energized from the marginalized perspectives, which afford a greater picture and instill empathy. It should be our basic human responsibility to support fellow humans in their growth if for nothing else other than for the purpose of bringing in, consulting, and benefiting from the multitude of capacities, skills, inventiveness that would come from so much human potential that remains or is kept uncommunicated, undeveloped and undernourished. The sense of global crises is, in fact, exposing such neglect but also revealing the need and possibility to expand and honor everyone's contribution because humanity's future and our individual fulfillment depend on the greater collective state of being. The role of crisis should be evaluated in the greater scheme of human social evolution – while crisis causes ruptures it can also create break-throughs. It is in the hopes of transforming critical destruction into creative deconstruction that we recognize that what constrains, limits, and pressures it also gives a point of departure, a platform and contrasting springboard from which more refined desires, visions, and ingenuity can be initiated. How can we then reconfigure crisis into contrast that gives impetus for change and action and thus soften its hard edges? Both ingenious creativity and solidarity arise and greater possibility for self-determination is spurred in times of crisis. How can we focus on those and maximize them? How can we understand and expand through contrast without detrimental and stunted suffering?

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* Gayatri Spivak's phrase.

6. Ideals, Global Governance, and Governmentality

While the call for Bread and Information is the call for the basic needs for everyone, it might appear idealizing even though it is pressingly achievable. Just as we are not able to dispense of certain forms of control and governance, we cannot afford to evacuate ideals. Between the poles of idealization and conspiracy, we need to create a way of thinking that actually utilizes their means and goes beyond both of them. The question of governance is redirected here to governmentality,* redefined as the governing mentality that needs to be transformed, as well as transfer and re-distribution of power. Re-focusing and re-defining governmentality on very personal terms would transfer means of governance, in fact, to the greatest possible number of individuals. This would be a re-arranged and re-thought individualism that recognizes that the self is more than one. This is the individualism which validates the individual as a unique perspective, a participating observer, and a co-creator whose well-being resides in sharing of the self and the world. At this turning point we decide what kind of ideal to aspire to and our intentions need to be pitched resolutely higher and significantly broader.

To understand the place where we find ourselves now, we should examine systems of governance and global engagement that are already in place. With hopeful guidance on the one hand, we should invest in informing about numerous organizations already in place which offer multiple means of humanitarian and activist engagement in the world and strive for their greater collaboration. Granted that they are put in place of having to vie for their respective funding and support, creating partnerships and associations among numerous such organizations would alleviate their competitive attitudes, fragmentation of involvement, and limitation of outreach. Particular focus should be put on and extra support should be given to informing smaller struggling communities across the globe about self-organizing and starting their own local humanitarian and self-help endeavors and resources. With vigilant evaluation, on the other hand, we should inform about the organizations of global governance and their intended purposes already set in place (such as UN Security Council, The International Criminal Court, The International Banking System, The Bank for International Settlement, The International Organization of Securities Commissions, and The World Economic Forum for example) that have been steering the course of global trends. The question of what should be done in the world and for the good of greater humanity has to be evaluated in relationship to such institutions and to the means and modes of their operation already mobilized.

How can institutions of intellectual eminence use the resources, the means, and the strategies of these organizations in order to steer, turn, and transform that which we, as critical observers at this critical point, see as detrimental turns? These overarching organizations make claims to human rights, democracy, welfare, and international justice in whose name they assert their function. How can we take up these heavily laden claims at what they have produced in action along with what the ideological underpinnings of their application have been in the world? In that attempt, we may have to turn our critical eye on our own critical speak as we take into account our privileges and our intellectual capital invested in institutions of power. What kind of knowledge are we producing? What kind of action are we suggesting so that we are not increasing control and enforcing measures but are rather working for greater democratization, dissemination of knowledge, and inspired action generated by

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* Michel Foucault's term; translation of the French *gouvernementalité*.

the voluntary movement of people and their ideas? What is necessary is recognition of one's own politico-cultural habitus while taking into account the mentality and interests of others as we lean toward self-governing individuals who are supported by the transfer of power from the institutional regulations toward personal responsibility. How can we relate to, learn from, compliment, re-direct, and remedy means of global governance already put in place in ways in which we can generate forms of global governmentality that are not constituted by threat, coercion, and overpowering? While the idea and logic of global unification arise amidst a series of self-serving politico-economic moves and trends, they are simultaneously motivated by our increasing desire for greater connectivity, universal bonding, equality and mutual affirmation.

7. Food for Thought

Forms of governance and institutional control will persist but also continue to evolve. The impulse to control others stems from our belief that we would secure something by such means, and it goes hand in hand with our shared desire to control our lives and destiny. Now, that desire needs to be transfigured into desire toward greater individual freedom and belief in our greater collectivity as intertwined and mutually dependent rather than oppositional. Human explorations continue regardless of regulations and ethical debates that accompany them – ethical debates, in fact, will be lagging and will have to catch up with inventions, discoveries, and advances of bio-sci-techno explorations. Our desire for expansion is insatiable and limitless and, as such, will always take precedence over our dilemmas of their moral validity. In fact, they are always undertaken under the basic premise and belief that we will be better off, in one way or another, if we pursue them. As such, bio-sci-techno explorations and expansion will always be underpinned by amoral reasoning (not moral or immoral) presented rather as purified research and it will be up to us to decide daily and individually how we position our beliefs and our attitudes, our lives in relation to them. We will be imbuing them with significance of general good or threat. The question will remain to be debated for what good and purpose and for whose benefit and use. Thus, informing people about the consequences along with possibilities becomes crucial in support of benevolent individual decision-making about the use of available means and creation of future desires.

Bread and information are, in terms of control and expansion, both critical and promising. To secure sustenance for everyone, agricultural production faces a series of concatenated challenges. Agriculture emits more gas pollution than the entire industrial sector does while it also takes most of the earth's water. Pollution, agri waste, oil and water usage that are sucking up rivers and lakes are the most exhausting aspects of it. And yet, we have not exhausted farming soil, which with re-thought planning and re-distributing of pastures and farmlands can open more, new, as well as innovative farming spaces. What is required is a cooperative forum of conventional farmers, organic production advocates, farmers, ecological experts, and nutritionists. Our agriculture will also have to re-connect with nature in order to re-discover the bioeconomy of the natural world and focus on processes of symbiosis, bio-recycling and re-use of waste that occur in nature. Fuel substitutes for oil and alternative energy sources are already being considered and explored, while urban planning and de-forestation need to be re-considered in cooperation with farmers. New innovative branches of agriculture such as permaculture, hydroponics, and aquaponics have been developing and need greater investments and broader applications. It is exactly smaller and struggling countries that have

been pioneering projects emerging from the research and experimentation with innovative and integrated food and shelter production.

While we face challenges with the production of food, we are increasingly concerned with the consumption side of information. In terms of effective education and information dissemination, the information influx and diversity of informational modes only increase. The important question here is then: What kind of readers in the general sense and observant participators are we and are we going to be? This is a simultaneously methodological and an ethical question as we keep deciding on what is important to read, what is readable by the greatest number of people, how to read and for what purpose. In that sense, we need to be preoccupied with information nutrition in terms of its variety and quality. On both sides of the issues, we need to disseminate greater quality information regarding possibilities of changing our food demands and improving our nutrition, while we need to treat information as our mind food and demand greater variety of quality representational material.

Granted that creative industries are the leading-edge and ground-breaking activities, greater investments in quality independent, informative, and inspired filmmaking and information technologies should be made. As people have discovered tremendous possibilities for global outreach and socio-political activism through social networking, it should be made available to as many people as possible. Internet access could be effectively provided via open community centers everywhere; investments should be made in creation and wide-distribution of free software. Providing a greater sense of safety, mobile phones equipped with cameras have been instrumental in recording injustices and informal testimonies of personal histories, which, posted and circulated on the internet, have been rallying people internationally around their shared sense of wrong-doing and need for empathic engagement. An organization and a program called "Witness" has been active globally to provide people with cameras so that they would be able to record struggle, expose injustice and suffering and disseminate that information internationally. Moreover, greater and more democratic access to publishing is already being explored and provided via the internet. As digital technology increases possibility for greater global supervision, it should also be used to its greatest democratic capacity by everyone to counter the vigilance of authoritarian surveillance.

Continued popularization of science will raise the awareness about scientific findings which give a resolutely more hopeful vision of our world while calling for greater responsibility for our actions and our thoughts in the world. Our re-discovered knowledge about entanglement and interconnectedness in the participatory universe in which nothing stands still and nothing is really wasted, brings about increasingly overlapping realizations and shared affinities between mystical spirituality and leading-edge science. By narrowing those gaps of beliefs, we can ensure reaching out to a greater number of people by ennobling scientific research with spiritual values while transforming and modernizing religious sentiments with scientific grounding. Gnome project discoveries of our genetic encoding will be playing a significant role in opening up our ethno-racial narrow-mindedness. This research will make us reconsider notions of ethno-racial purity and "natural" antagonism; it will make warring sides reconsider their stereotyping, which capitalize on the nationalist politics of pure blood ties. In our continued research, we are repeatedly validating a multitude of traditional beliefs and views right along with ground-breaking discoveries. Rather than work by renunciation of the old and the traditional, they should be brought into the fold of scientific research and

called upon in our attempts to engage more people and wider range of cultures into the most current human inquiries. Different cultural practices have the capacity to re-invigorate our meticulous explorations with intuitive knowledge and visions which resonate with general human needs shared across cultural and generational divides. Thus untapped local knowledge and ingenuity would inform and inspire organizations with greater scope of influence; and people would be the technologically empowered recorders of cultural heritage and knowledge, be historical witnesses and more individualized.

In terms of our intellectual heritage, along with the scientific and spiritual knowledge, we should bring forward and out the most current discussions in Philosophy and Critical Theory on possibilities of political activism, ethics and community, love, life forms, and animals, to name just a few. Thus, we would be demystifying philosophy without taking away the intricacies and refinement of critical discourse within the proper context. Toward that, Humanities and Aesthetic Education would have to be rescued from increased budget cutting. Humanities as an interdisciplinary field tracking, questioning, and evaluating the overall trajectory of human development (our conditions and accomplishments) is instrumental for developing our scrupulously critical reading skills while keeping in sight a more comprehensive, bigger picture. As such, it increases our capacity not only to appreciate finer human achievements but also to read into agendas and ideologies (something not confined just to the darker sides of our past), that may be currently shaping our lives and might not be in actual alignment with our best long-term interests. Proliferation and speeding up of information are evident and inevitable; the new critical literacy will be even more demanding as we keep sifting carefully through the influx of information. Regarding questions of how we will read, interpret, and utilize information, we realize that limits to our reading skills are thus limits to our capacity to strategize, predict, and envision. We need to address currently the detrimental sides to capitalism and globalizing capital whose logic exclusively focuses on productivity, consumerism, returns and gains. Critical skills and interdisciplinarity of the kind Humanities and Aesthetic Education can afford will have the capacity to counter, alleviate, and transform such logic from within. To do so will require a community of interpreters.

Information as a means for framing minds and mindsets in ways that dispel dogmatic and propagandistic tendencies and lead toward critical engagement with self and the world should be approached from a tremendously powerful understanding that what we know we cannot unknow – once exposed to information which makes us create powerful connections in understanding we cannot undo that kind of informational command, we can only transform that knowledge further. There is the potential for hope, whereby information and education are seen and applied as dynamic means of the continual processes of becoming. What is critical here is the uneven access to diverse technologies and methodologies of literacy, education, and information. To introduce and bring up to speed the marginalized and the exploited with the discussions that are ongoing socially, technologically, scientifically and in ways in which they are readable, understandable to them while ennobling to others, we need to re-invent storytelling. Personal and collective accounts in storytelling, the ancient and most empathically effective means of communication, are a form of activism in itself through which we need to revive communities of storytellers as historical witnesses and conduits of living knowledge.

Our knowledge will need to engage multiple intelligences in an intercultural, interdisciplinary, and intermediary fashion. We need to nourish critical skills that will activate and

cultivate multidirectional thinking and perception along with greater conscious awareness, already present potential within us, that our thoughts and beliefs precede action and inform ourselves, our place in the world, and the world we inhabit.

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In a robust public life, – democratic in unifying without uniformity – motivation for reform and transformation is prompted when people feel that they are emotionally invested in them; when they feel that they can initiate and direct those changes. While this is intended in part to educate and empower the marginalized and the violated, it is also meant to give dignity back to them. They would see themselves as and recognized as invaluable human presences who are contributing to humanity from their own disadvantaged circumstantial positions but through advantageous perspectives and feedback. Simultaneously, this is to inform, sensitize, and guide those who are in power in order to show them that if they are depleting locales, economies, people and opportunities without careful consideration for the well-being of others, they are depleting their own humanity which cannot exist in the long run in the cliquish and elitist context they are attempting to create and preserve. They are positioned in the intersecting spaces of marginalization and elitism along different lines of our existence. Our work would be to recognize our vulnerabilities along with our privileges; our sense of injustice right along with our own complicities with power structures. Continual and varied exposures to different perspectives, personal accounts and testimonies are crucial in recognizing our positions in the greater scheme of global social organizations as well as possibilities of serving from within for the greater collective good.

"It is hopeful visions of consciousness expansion that guide our material, physical, environmental, technological, and scientific growth."

With multiplicity of perspectives and diversification of means we are changing the rationale and motivation for choices we make in every aspect of our human condition by tapping into our intrinsic desire for betterment (first to reach out for feeling better from the condition in which we find ourselves and then to work on bettering oneself from and out of given circumstances). Providing the basic prerequisites to increase the capacity of people for self-determination and self-guided decision making, we need to engage solidarity and support in empathy and recognition and cooperation in reciprocity – the very measures of our magnitude and magnanimity. We have to believe in our visions not as controlling doers, activists, saviors but as insightful co-creators – this simultaneously redistributes responsibility while it acknowledges the dignity and contribution of many deemed hopeless. In the multifaceted capacities all we have is the future of our opening up and out. Our development in all aspects of our humanity – physical, emotional, psychological, intellectual, intuitive, spiritual – is where we are going for the emergence of a more whole human being. The internal multiplicity, diversity, and multifaceted capacity of such a human being are to be actualized in the interconnected network of our microecologies.

In the light of the critical issues presented here for consideration, the particular alliance between WAAS and Club of Rome could see us through Limits to Growth to the vision already put forth of the Limitless Growth.[6] It is hopeful visions of consciousness expansion that guide our material, physical, environmental, technological, and scientific growth; while these very advances, in turn, have already propelled the refinement of our needs and desires for a transformation of consciousness. Every human takes pride and gets a sense of self-esteem not only in our ability to produce but particularly in our capacity to create. In that respect, our recognition that we live in a participatory universe will have at least two-fold immediate effect – simultaneously our hopeful recognition that we can change, replenish, regenerate things and our acceptance of even greater, more immediate and intimate responsibility in the re-creation and re-invention of ourselves and our circumstances. M. L. King insightfully pointed out that it is our greatest fear to recognize how powerful we are because while it empowers us it also bestows on us a greater sense of responsibility. We are, then, to instill hope; to infuse belief in the capacity and conscious contribution of every single one of us just as we find ourselves right now in our immediate circumstances; and to invoke a sense of responsibility toward hopeful growth of re-distributed wisdom, wealth, and well-being.

In the participatory universe, we know that we give our attention to ultimately what we face around us in response to and confirmation of that which we infused with our intention, energy, and belief. We hear repeated complaints that we live in utterly skeptical times where people are lost and unable to subscribe to spiritual belief or they resort to blind and unexamined following of monolithic religious institutions. If truly perceptive faith (observant neither in renunciation nor in submission but in its higher critical appreciation) is to be engendered, it is to be renewed and transformed by belief in the human potential and our intrinsic desire not only for more but also for the better across any divides we might have constructed along the way. How can we cultivate in ourselves, in others, and in the way we relate to others belief in the evolving well-being and a sense of greater safety and connectedness while refining all resources for the betterment of our individual condition as it intertwines with our collective? Toward such sense of responsible interconnectedness, continued transformational education leads by fine-tuning us into sympathetic vibration. Such vision traces our individual growth from the struggling survivors to political subjects to self-governing individuals, and into the co-creators as we rise along the consciousness scale of our own capacities and responsibilities to ourselves, each other, our planet and beyond.

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Notes

1.   Ian Angus, *Identity and Justice* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008)

2.   Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011)

3.   Gayatri Spivak, *An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012)

4.   Ibid.

5.   Nikolas Rose, *Inventing Ourselves: Psychology, Power, and Personhood* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). Rose astutely observes that individual autonomy is not antithetical to political power; rather, it is the object and the instrument of modern governmentality.

6.   Garry Jacobs and Ivo Šlaus, "From Limits to Growth to Limitless Growth," *Cadmus* 1, no. 4 (2012): 59-76