

# UNVEILING THE PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

Aku bertanya:  
Apakah gunanya pendidikan  
bila hanya akan membuat seseorang menjadi asing  
di tengah kenyataan persoalannya?  
Apakah gunanya pendidikan bila hanya mendorong seseorang menjadi layang-  
layang di perusahaan terkenal schlumberger, freeport, microsoft,  
namun kikuk pulang ke daerahnya?  
Apakah gunanya seseorang  
belajar filsafat, sastra, teknologi, ilmu kedokteran, atau apa saja,  
ketika ia pulang ke daerahnya, lalu berkata:  
"Di sini aku merasa asing dan sepi!"  
-W.S. Rendra+modification-

## 1. Education as philosophy

Education always becomes problem without end and even without the beginning, hence talking about education means grumbling about culture. As cited by John Dewey, an educational philosopher:

*"education is the **fundamental method of social progress and reform**. All reform which rest simply upon the enactment of law. Or the threatening of certain penalties, or upon changes in mechanical or outward arrangements, are transitory and futile. Education is a regulation of the process of coming to share in the social consciousness; and that the adjustment of individual activity on the basis of this social consciousness is **the only sure method of social reconstruction**"<sup>1</sup>*

School shall become a kind of regeneration for social improvement. It becomes the pillar of social development. In other words, the face of community's future depends on the "face" of the education today.

Alfred Whitehead cited,

*"education is the acquisition of art and the utilization of knowledge"<sup>2</sup>*

In educational process, there shall not be collecting information and knowledge then heaping them in the head of the students. Education shall stimulate ability for appreciation, innovation, and creation based upon the perspective of the knowledge. Thus, the basic platform of the education is not memories and even calculating as we see today mostly, the students must be able proposing alternative solutions for social problem in their community.

The other philosopher of education, Paulo Freire cited that education must be able to release the pupils for their freedom from everything that shackled

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<sup>1</sup> John Dewey, *Philosophy of Education*, Littlefield Adams & Co., Ames, 1958 hal. 62.

<sup>2</sup> Alfred North Whitehead, *The Aims of Education*, The New American Library, New York, 1929.

them<sup>3</sup>. Education means the process for enlightenment for self-realization that his destiny can be changed, and that their life can be much better if and only if they can beat their tortured conditions.

Three figures above have given us a clue to school philosophy - that education in this vision is a humanizing process and civilizing human (humanization and civilization). School supposes to earn creativity and not depending on its surrounding society helps, in the other hand, they could produce wise man to be asked and have capability to supply solutions to existing realities.

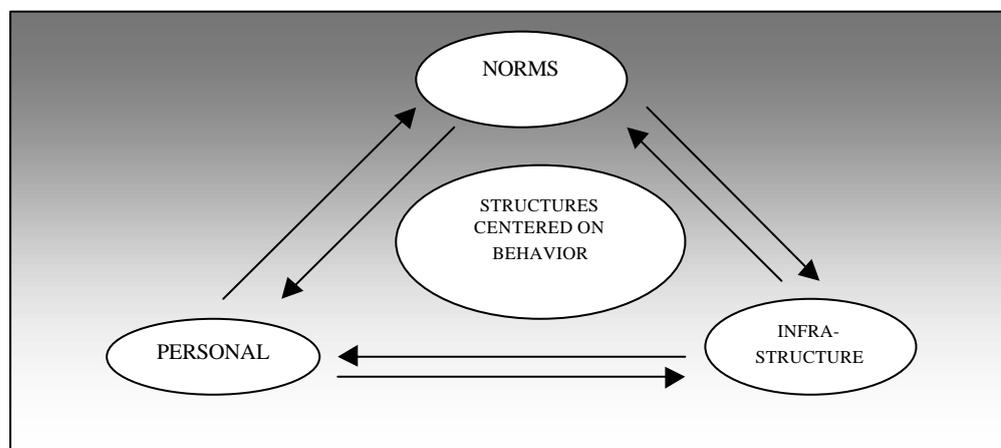
## 2. Education and Culture

Defining culture is not as easy as it sounds, since it involves one whole aspects of human and society. Yet, when we view human as *animalus symbolicum*, which means creatures of symbols we can see that without system of symbol (someone called it *semiology*) we have now, we can never own civilization as we do. These symbols arranged to become sub-culture, or even culture as a whole super-structure of society. Symbolic process of human basically can be classified into philosophy, religion, science, art, history, mythology, and language<sup>4</sup>. Thus, what we have to analyze is Culture.

If we place education as a cultural-transmission-system, it is a certain for us to understand that education, basically, must not be separated from the culture of where it is existed. In the other words, **education must not be alienated from its culture**, since if it does, the culture itself will come to end.

In cultural transmission system, what is transmitted, of course, any forms of symbolic process stated above. Tools of transmission might be taken as formal education in schools, civilian education programs in mass media, or non-formally in sort of courses, social training, etc.

In the meantime, having the program succeeded, we need to learn national anthropologist articles, Koentjaraningrat<sup>5</sup>, who expressed that every social means, including schools, badly need to have:



Those three factors above, that build the triangle, are mostly important factors in concerning education system that we live today.

Ironically, we still can see a sad sound reality that our education, in any point of view, has been alienated from our own social realities. Our education system in fact has a totally different target with our social demands. Today young generation features are MTV-mania, having bad "mental" of Shinchan and

<sup>3</sup> Paulo Freire, *Pendidikan Kaum Tertindas* (terjemahan), LP3ES, Jakarta, 1985.

<sup>4</sup> Ernest Cassirer, *An Essay on Man*, Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1956.

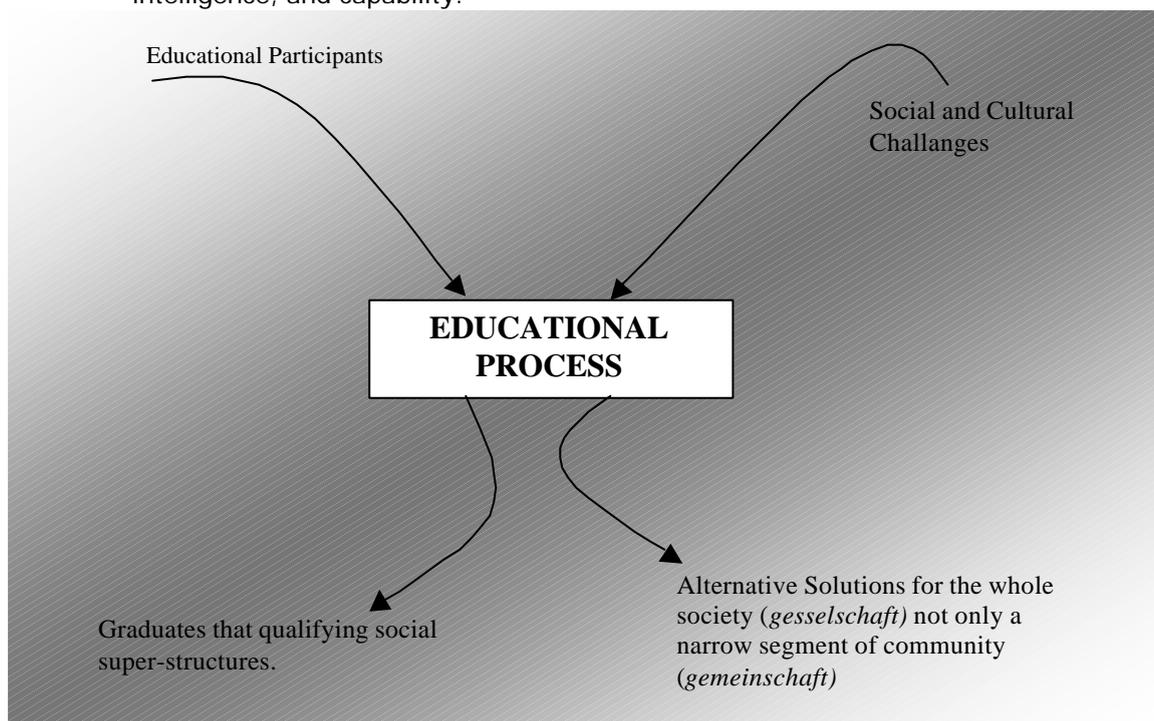
<sup>5</sup> Koentjaraningrat, *Kebudayaan, Mentalitas, dan Pembangunan*, Gramedia, Jakarta, 1997.

Doraemon characters, a delighted PlayStation, gorgeous pairs of Nike and Reebok shoes, plain T-shirts of Bennetton, cool taste of Coca-Cola and McDonalds, whom the white-grey uniformed girls polished by cosmetics. Good quality education only owned by who can pay course fee in pre-collage course (*bimbingan belajar*), since regular schools: Elementary School, Junior, and senior high school only a formal learning stages for academic certifications. Pre-collage course becomes a place of solving Ebtanas & UMPTN tests, not as we have explained in the first chapter of this article.

School now has been truly separated from its reality. Students cannot comprehend Physics as Isaac Newton did, yet it only understood as formulated puzzles that figuring out a try-out tests. School today is not an attractive "stuff" anymore, because school now only a place to do routine activities of morning-to-evening works. School has now become an only slowing agent for biological process, since it slows down marriage ages, and nothing but it. School is a industry of certificates, not earning certify intellectual.

Our schools today do not reflect their roles as a cultural means. Institution of education only acts as selling certification that ignores the true essence of education itself. Education participants, either pupils or university students, in the end, act only as objects of education process that in contrary, supposed to be subjects of education together within the teachers, tutors, instructures, or lecturers, meanwhile world, and existed realities, supposed to become objects of education. Hence, institution of education capable to earn hi-quality output:

- Results of research system using scientific method existed able to answer challenges of today social culture.
- Graduates who are ready to 'jump-in' society, includes ready-ness in moral, intelligence, and capability.



### 3. Our Collage System

Phillip G. Altbach, in his bounded essays, "*Higher Education in The Third World*", expressing that co-operations between education institutions of industrial countries and third world countries (like Indonesia) actually is not "truly" a co-operation, in fact it is another form of work sharing. Education institutions of western countries will always become the central of science development, while then education institution of third world countries become imitating institutions. Or it is said to be "peripheral" hi-education system. According to his research

result, it is too difficult to think of a good format of hi-education in the third world countries who dreamed to defeat developed countries hi-education system. Even India and China, third world countries those are very diligent to analyze and develop adjusting pattern of education to be applied in their countries, at the end, have to face big problem of funding sources and human resources, infrastructures of educational equipment. An example, do farmers of this country today truly need hand-phones, or something like that? Correlation of technical discipline developed is discipline in which has orientation to face foreigner industries which have different methods in solving local society realities.

Existence of CDC (Career Development Center) with its PROBANGKIR (Program Pengembangan Karir) in ITB as a mean for multinational industries to get into academic life of the campus, is an example. This is reflected from the stands seen in the fair which are big, international scale industries, not local graduates of ITB. Students are not taught to be self-reliant in having a job. They are trained to apply job vacancies, and not trained to create their own mass-society economy system. Dollars and glorious style of life have become attractive factors. Teaching discipline in the selves of students of living glamorously, has made the students forget their social realities. This is seriously need to be taken as an important concern by the ITB Autonomy Implementation Team. The *kiblat* of high-education program should not be in Europe or America, it has got to be here, our land, Indonesia, the place where education institutions live and grow. Only ones who have local realizations who can compete in global competition.

Observing the guide-line in Pengembangan Pendidikan Tinggi Jangka Panjang 1996-2005 published by oleh Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Tinggi, basically direction of high-education has turned to local social-culture condition. Yet the implementation offered by Implementation Team of ITB Autonomy, obviously seen that target of education offered is education which is so international-oriented that impressing an ignorance of local aspect of education. A small example is when the graduation-session which seemly rushed to be occupied, which in general knowledge, our high-education curriculum is still not *down to the earth*, where students forced to finish their high-education as soon as possible by the target of high as the highest GPA can be reached.

As the impact, a condition of "ignorance" to something social-cultural-sense, which is now inherent in extracurricular activities, or in general, called "*kemahasiswaan*". Social-sensitivity of ITB students projected slowing down if disciplined in forcing condition which forget them to their existence aspects, into high-motivation of having such matters.

It is unavoidable that student activities in Indonesia much affecting social-political weather as social-control system, and this factor never seen integrated with academic capability of the students. Pumping motivation much about curriculum academic and not pumping to activities and increasing social-sensitivity.

To implement Campus Autonomy that is based on the willing to increase quality and capability of the students, technical parameter that is hold is not always a quantifiable factor such as GPA or things related. Things related to *kemahasiswaan* activities must be pumped up and that is suppose to be together duty of lecturers and students. This is the time when Lecturers and students hand-in-hand work as partner in developing high education program.

That way, it is hoped that a conducive weather between *kemahasiswaan*, which is still longed to do their part as control function to social-culture realities at one time also mastering their own department. *Kemahasiswaan* will not be sacrificed to reach targets from a willing of a giant who wants them enter their giant machine industry, the truth is that high concern of the high education institutions to social realities hoped to graduates persons who can build up mass-based economic sector. In other words, human resources that are ready with the culture of industry need to be faced earlier in order higher education not alienated from its social civilization.

Thus, it is just the time for us now to stop comparing our country's higher education institutions with ones of the post-developed countries. High education institutions must be returned to its owners: the society where the institutions lies. They have to become a transmission media and culture transformation means to society so that alternative solutions can be given to the wide society at the local level.

Dealing with implementing Campus Autonomy, ITB should compile a mechanism that is democratic, and always face back to social-reality not making its own *kiblat* to European or American system.

However, Campus Autonomy is a perfect moment in education system improvement to truly implement duty of high-education institution's Tridharma Perguruan Tinggi, that is: Education, Research, and Social services. Total evaluation from *kemahasiswaan*, curriculum implementation, and national-cultural conditions, must be done in gaining Higher-Education Institutions which have orientation to forming of *Civil Society* that is democratic and humanizing.

Neocolonialism in the form of cultural colonialism, which is now diffusing the whole aspect of our lives, just like entertainment, fun, life style, etc, that tends to decrease our national identity urgently need to be anticipated, even stopped before it comes too far into our educational system. Because education is a process of cultural transmission for pillars of national life in the future. Higher education institutions need to give back to its function as the center of culture and democracy, either in the form of autonomy and BHMN (Badan Hukum Milik Negara) or anything.

“ Institut Teknologi Bandung, sebagai kelanjutan lembaga pendidikan tinggi teknik, ilmu pasti dan ilmu pengetahuan alam yang pertama di Indonesia, merupakan salah satu pusat kebudayaan bangsa yang mengemban misi menyelenggarakan pendidikan, mengembangkan dan menyebarkan serta mengabdikan ilmu pengetahuan, teknologi, kesenian dan ilmu kemanusiaan serta ilmu sosial untuk kepentingan dan kesejahteraan umat manusia serta kemajuan bangsa Indonesia”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Mukadimah Statuta Institut Teknologi Bandung