Critical Studies in Education, 2014
Vol. 55, No. 2, 154–169, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17508487.2013.839460

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Hope and fear in education for sustainable development

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(*Received 15 June 2013; accepted 28 August 2013*)

Education for sustainable development represents a politically prioritized area of knowledge in contemporary Swedish education and as such it has acquired a prominent position among the governing values of educational policy. Insofar as education for sustainable development is directed at securing the future of human well-being, this article suggests that it concerns a moral discourse where notions about what may or may not happen in the future plays an important role in the governance of practices and behaviors in the present. Since the future is shrouded in uncertainty, it is suggested that the emotions of hope and fear may be understood in terms of tools for governing the everyday lives of children, invoking alluring and deterrent images that influence their decision-making. Besides seeking to gain a better understanding of some of the preconditions of education for sustainable development, the aim of this article concerns an investigation into some of the effects that education for sustainable development may have on the lives of children. To this end, it looks at how hope and fear are being put into play within the discourse as strategies for governing individuals in relation to the uncertainty of the future.

Keywords: education for sustainable development; fear; future; governance; hope

Introduction

In this article, I will focus on investigating how ideas about what is necessary for sustaining human well-being in the future affect contemporary education in Sweden. I will do this by studying how the emotions of hope and fear are employed and put to work as tools for handling the uncertainty of the future within the discourse of education for sustainable development. On the one hand, this endeavor to control the outcome of the future appears to be highly topical since education for sustainable development is specifically concerned with shaping the future. At the same time, however, it may be understood in light of a very old philosophical inquiry into whether or not humans possess the ability to control the outcome of future events. The affirmation of this question appears to be a necessary precondition for understanding the centrality of the concept of sustainable development for shaping contemporary society. But what would happen if we were to disregard this momentarily? How would the discourse of education for sustainable development appear if we disconnect it from the idea that humans should deal with future threats in a particular way in order to ensure their own survival? Or, put differently, how does education for sustainable development work in terms of an instrument for governing the present regardless of what the future might hold in store?

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More specifically, I aim to discuss hope and fear as tools for governing human behavior through the use of different morally charged images of possible future consequences. In order to do this, I will first present a brief overview of a philosophical discussion concerning the passions of hope and fear found in the texts of Seneca, Spinoza, and Nietzsche. Rather than supposing that hope and fear emerge as necessary cognitive tools for appropriating the external world, I will argue that hope and fear, at least in part, may be understood to function by drawing attention from the present and directing it toward what may or may not come to pass in the future. An effect of this would be that people's decisions are grounded in abstract notions concerning that which lies beyond their experience rather than the concrete and the experienced.

Drawing on Michel Foucault's (1977) methodological application of Nietzsche, I intend to approach this problem genealogically in order to show how hope and fear, as powerful tools for governing human behavior have traveled from a traditional religious context to a Late Modern secular context. In order to situate this problem in a practical setting, I will look closely at educational material where hope and fear appear as clear incentives for thinking and acting in certain desirable ways while simultaneously blocking other ways of thinking and acting (cf. Foucault, 1981). This is a way of illustrating how the concept of sustainable development appears to demand a certain perspective in order to be understood. Certain taken for granted ideas about the world and about human beings appear to be required in order for education for sustainable development to make sense. In this article, I aim to focus on one of these ideas in particular, namely the notion that humans have the presumed ability to control their future.

Since sustainable development – defined in the Brundtland Report as 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (WCED, 1987, p. 43) – has emerged as a concept geared for sustaining and securing human well-being, it has acquired a central position among the governing values of contemporary education in Sweden. It appears in international agreements and in national curricula, and it is referred to as a foundational value across different levels of Swedish society. One might argue that the concept of sustainable development has acquired its privileged position among these foundational values largely because it targets something as general and seemingly undisputed as the promotion of human well-being. What makes it interesting to study in an educational context is that it appears to allow for a practical opportunity to study the values and notions that form a common conceptual basis for contemporary Swedish society. The question of what may be regarded as given points of departure for contemporary Swedish education is important not only because it directs the gaze at the predominant values and notions of a particular society, but, in addition, also because it highlights the values and notions that are not discussed. Consequently, the broader aim of this article is to make visible the borderline between what is acceptable to think and do in a contemporary Swedish educational context and what is not. Besides making this borderline visible, the purpose is to invoke a perspective that may explain the preconditions necessary for understanding the demarcations drawn. In other words, what do we need to understand in order to understand education for sustainable development? Looking at how the emotions of hope and fear are being put to use within the discourse, I aim to gain a better understanding of some of the necessary preconditions of education for sustainable development.

Education for sustainable development: targeting a risky and uncertain future

Educational projects that are geared for instigating social change and social improvement, such as education for sustainable development, are oriented toward the future (Popkewitz,

2008). Arguably, education at large may be understood in terms of an ethical project aiming at securing human well-being in the future (Lauder, Brown, Dillabough, & Halsey, 2006). The goal of stabilizing or securing the future appears to be a common point of departure for the different practices in this context, from the formulation of policy to the designing of teaching materials. It is in relation to the uncertain development of the future that hope and fear gain their positions as driving forces in the sense that the hope for a better future is always related to the fear of an imminent disaster. Moreover, it is in relation to these assumed opposites that any actions may be evaluated and judged.

In this context, the future may be understood in terms of a commonly established fiction grounded in different conceivable scenarios about what may come to pass. This does not mean that ideas about the future have no real effect on people's lives, but that these ideas originate in the hopes and fears of people rather than in any comprehensive and neutral knowledge about the condition of the world. Kenneth Hultqvist aptly describes the future as an influential fiction:

> The future is not something waiting out there, cut and dried; it is a fiction. But since activities, people, things, and events are related to each other in accordance with this fiction, it brings about real effects. (Hultqvist, 2006, p. 24)

These effects are interesting to study as they indicate the potential influence of commonly held notions about possible future scenarios. Insofar as they can be related to ideas about what may or may not come to pass, they appear to be connected with the influence that hope and fear have over people suspended in constant doubt. Arguably, it is the uncertainty of the images of the future that lend hope and fear to such influence; an influence that is put into play whenever people come together to outline strategies for dealing with the unknown and the unpredictable (cf. Massumi, 2007). For this reason, one might conclude that commonly held images of the future are essentially moral constructions insofar as they are grounded in the governing values of society (Hultqvist, 2006). That is, beliefs about how things might turn out in the future come to influence ideas about how we should live in the present. This, in turn, implies that if you gain influence over images of what the future will be like, you will also have a certain degree of influence over the values that govern the prevailing moral compass.

The different conceivable risks of the future are thereby turned into incentives for instigating moral rules of conduct in the present. That is, commonly held images of the future are not only connected with different possible future scenarios but in addition they are linked to a distinctly moral idea about the risks of certain types of behaviors. In this context one might speak in terms of the future as risk (Hultqvist, 2006; Rose, 1999). With regard to education for sustainable development, the notion of the future as risk may be linked with the notable tendency to establish causal relationships between seemingly mundane actions in children's everyday lives and various risk scenarios pertaining to the survival of the planet (Dahlbeck & De Lucia Dahlbeck, 2012). The connecting link between everyday actions and global processes of change seems to be commonly associated with the hope of being able to change the world for the better, parallel with the fear of more or less unconsciously contributing to its deterioration.

To the degree that the concept of sustainable development concerns the human ability to successfully predict and influence future events one might argue that it is grounded in morality. This is because the governance of children's moral behavior appears to require some stability in the moral framework so as to facilitate the just evaluation of their actions. This means that good actions, in the sense that they are 'sustainable' actions, are always

assumed to be related to an ideal or perfect version of the same action. The ideal version of the action functions as a means by which to measure the empirical expressions in a stable and reliable sense. This is a moral idea based on the notion that every empirical expression has a corresponding ideal reflection which can be turned into a sort of moral code for judging things and events according to universal values such as good and evil (Smith, 2007). The idea is that depending on the relative proximity between the performed action and its ideal on an imagined scale one may determine the intrinsic moral worth of the action. To the extent then that education for sustainable development concerns the shaping of moral decision-makers one might approach it in terms of a moral project (Dahlbeck, 2012). Given this, it may not come as a surprise that sustainable development has acquired its position as an elevated concept included in the foundational values of educational policy in contemporary Sweden. Consequently, working for a sustainable future emerges as a seemingly natural element of Swedish education and the question of how to ensure a sustainable future becomes paramount.

Moreover, insofar as 'emotions inform our ethical values and actions' (Boler, 1997, p. 203), the moral form of education for sustainable development appears to require the study of the role of emotions (especially with regards to power relations) within the discourse. As such, this article takes on the challenge described by Megan Boler (1997) and endeavors to 'help distinguish the purposes and rationales of such agendas' by studying 'the underlying philosophies – models of morality and epistemology, and their defining discourses – which inform existing and possible educational curricula of emotion' (p. 204). This approach involves understanding subjectivity (i.e., the deployment of emotion and affect) in education as decidedly political (Zembylas, 2007), meaning that investigations into the ideological role of emotion is crucial for understanding power relations in education.

The next section serves to illustrate how, from a genealogical point of view, hope and fear have traveled from a theological to a secular context. Temporarily detaching these concepts from the different historical contexts in which they have been embedded enables me to focus on some of their basic theoretical conditions. These theoretical conditions may, in turn, serve to illuminate hope and fear as tools for governance in a contemporary educational context. They may also serve to destabilize some taken for granted assumptions regarding human ability to influence the outcome of future events within the discourse of education for sustainable development.

On hope and fear and the desire to control the uncontrollable

Hope and fear are powerful emotions. Most people would probably agree that hope and fear exert a great deal of influence over their daily lives in one way or another. Because of this, hope and fear are also potentially forceful instruments of governance. That is, if one can control the hopes and fears of people, one may also influence their behavior and the way they conduct their daily lives. This notion is far from new but ties into an old philosophical discussion concerning the relationship between human decision-making and external influences such as generally held opinions and beliefs. Historically, this might concern, for example, the great influence that ecclesiastics have had over the ways that citizens think and act in their daily lives. In part, this influence can be explained by the fact that representatives of organized sectarian religion have traditionally claimed the right to invoke and enforce a moral framework relating actions in the present to possible consequences in the future. Certain ways of being in the present are connected with rewards in the afterlife while other ways of being are connected with punishments in the afterlife. The influence of hope

and fear may also be understood in less overtly disciplinary terms. It may also concern how people allow for their hopes and fears to govern them in more subtle ways. Some people's fear of contagious diseases may for instance lead them to avoid crowded places and some people's hope for personal success may lead them to expose themselves to situations that they would otherwise avoid out of discomfort. The point is that hope and fear often make us do things caused by factors about which, to some extent, we are unaware. A vague desire for something better or an abstract fear of something worse can make people do things with highly uncertain results. However, the desire to control the future often appears to be stronger than the will to acknowledge the uncertain nature of the future.

Roman philosopher and politician Lucius Annaeus Seneca perceived hope and fear in terms of interrelated emotions in the sense that both passions are directed toward predicting the outcome of future events. Above all, he understood hope and fear in terms of obstacles to be overcome in the striving for true happiness. By focusing on things that lie beyond human influence, Seneca argued that hope and fear would always be associated with the risk of disappointment (Seneca, 1793). Human happiness, for Seneca, was to be grounded in an endeavor to control that, which can be successfully controlled. This would involve the understanding of oneself and of nature rather than vague speculations about what the future might hold in store. Seneca treated hope and fear as inseparable insofar as without fear, hope would turn into certainty and without hope, fear would turn into despair (Seneca, 1793). Thereby, both passions function by suspending the mind in a constant state of anxious anticipation triggered by the uncertainty of the outcome of future events (Seneca, 1969). Rather than drawing attention to present affairs, Seneca claimed that hope and fear would make people focus on that which may or may not happen, making them highly responsive to various external influences.

For enlightenment philosopher Baruch Spinoza, as for Seneca, hope and fear were to be considered interdependent (Nun, 2005, p. 65). That is, rather than treating hope and fear as opposites (see Day, 1970) Spinoza understood hope and fear to be mutually constitutive insofar as one is dependent on the other to function. In his magnum opus, the *Ethics*, Spinoza defined hope and fear as an inconstant joy and an inconstant sorrow 'born of the idea of a future or past thing whose outcome we to some extent doubt' (Spinoza, 1996, p. 106).

Spinoza was particularly interested in the influence that hope and fear have over people in various political and religious contexts. This focus on hope and fear in a social and political setting meant that Spinoza added a dimension to Seneca by targeting the external influences that he perceived to have most effect on the lives of the general public. Accordingly, in his *Theological–political treatise* (2007), he discussed the use of hope and fear as tools for governing people. Since hope and fear are grounded in doubts about the future, Spinoza argued that they made for well-adjusted instruments for influencing people by way of either alluring images of what would happen if they behaved in a morally sound way or cautionary images of the predicaments to which certain immoral types of behaviors would lead. Echoing Seneca, Spinoza argued that a person who is relying on hope and fear is at the mercy of superstition and will therefore be very easily swayed by the slightest external impulse in the hope of being rewarded for good behavior and in fear of being punished for bad behavior (Spinoza, 2007). By extension, a person governed by hope and fear would be at the mercy of other people's predictions about the future and would be relegated to the role of the slave, seeking to do good primarily in order to avoid punishment (Spinoza, 2007). Spinoza criticized representatives of the church for manipulating people by taking advantage of the capriciousness of nature and the unpredictability of fortune in order to gain control over the way they lived their daily lives (Nadler, 2011). Hope and fear,

argued Spinoza, would keep people suspended in a state of obedient anticipation for what representatives of the church declared to be possible rewards and punishments (Nadler, 2006).

During the latter part of the nineteenth century, German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche picked up on this philosophical discussion in his critique of traditional morality and its enslaving effects on the wills of the general public. In *Human, all too human*, Nietzsche (1994) wrote a short text on hope and the bondage that he claimed it represented by keeping people trapped in perpetual expectancy of the future. To be sure, Nietzsche paints a very gloomy picture of what is commonly associated with positive and strengthening properties. Rather than perceiving hope as a necessary revitalization that gives people the strength they need to persist in their striving for a better life and a better world, Nietzsche, much like Seneca and Spinoza before him, perceived hope as a mental ball and chain. That is, he saw hope as effectively holding people back and forcing them to submit to common (and thereby confused) beliefs characterized by a desire to predict and avoid misfortunes that are always looming somewhere just ahead in an abstract and elusive future world. And just like Seneca and Spinoza, Nietzsche understood hope and fear to be interdependent. To the extent that people are constrained by fear, they are also driven by the hope to attain that which the moral world holds out as possible rewards. The hope of redemption and atonement arises alongside fear, Nietzsche argued, as a servant of morality and its geography of power (Strong, 1999). Accordingly, Nietzsche adds to the discussion by highlighting the productivity of hope and fear in terms of their being fundamental to a form of morality hinged on the combating of abstract future threats.

From a Nietzschean perspective, people's shared fears can be made meaningful in relation to an overarching fear of emptiness. In that sense, the common fear of future catastrophes supply people with something to unite behind and to work toward, creating a shared sense of belonging. Paradoxically, this means that to combat threats to society is productive and meaning-making in itself. Supposing that the threats were to be finally and definitively overcome, it would in a sense signify the end of a morality whose principle driving force appears to be the very threats that are combated. Accordingly, in *Beyond good and evil*, Nietzsche (2008) wrote: 'Assuming that we could entirely abolish the danger, the grounds for fear, then we would have abolished this morality as well: it would no longer be necessary, it *would deem itself* no longer necessary!' (p. 88). This implies that no matter how meaningless life appears or how difficult the daily struggle is on the part of the individual, the fear of total emptiness proves to be enough inducement for bringing people together in societies ruled by morality (Strong, 1999).

Based on these three different – although genealogically related – philosophical positions, an image emerges of hope and fear as emotions directed toward the unknown and grounded in doubts concerning the outcome of future events. Hope and fear, from this perspective, are taken to bring about an anxiety that appear to make people highly susceptible to external influences. Consequently, powerful images of the possible consequences of an individual's actions may govern the behaviors and beliefs of people insofar as they strive for rewards or seek to avoid punishments. Both hope and fear are productive, however, since they appear to give rise to powerful images that act as driving forces of morality. In a way then, one might approach the threat of the destruction of our planet in terms of a necessary instigator of common endeavors to develop new technical solutions or to develop ever more sustainable models for human coexistence. It is in terms of productive forces that it is interesting to approach hope and fear as instruments for governing people in a contemporary context such as education for sustainable development. Besides shaping moral subjects in line with a pre-given framework, they help bring about a sense of order

to chaos by establishing causal relations that make the world appear more understandable and manageable.

Studying hope and fear as instruments of governance from a genealogical perspective is interesting as it allows for an analysis of foundational political concepts informed by remnants of religious ideas and practices in what is presumed to be a secular context (Golder, 2007). Since both Spinoza and Nietzsche have discussed the historical employment of hope and fear as powerful tools of governance in organized religious settings, it appears justified to study some contemporary secular practices where the notions of hope and fear are being evoked. While, from a theological point of view, these concepts may be grounded in the notion of an almighty God, this appears much more difficult to justify in a secular context. Hence, Golder remarks that 'Without the resort to a transcendent ground of authority, sovereignty must provide that source itself in an act of self-positing, a groundless self-grounding' (2007, p. 171). By studying hope and fear as instruments of governance rooted in a traditional religious context, the individual practices where hope and fear are being employed presently may be understood not only in terms of a necessary response to an escalating global political crises, but also in terms of a form of power producing certain available ways of thinking and acting.

Hope and fear in education for sustainable development: an example

The example that I will be looking closer at in this article is a teacher's guide on consumption developed by The Keep Sweden Tidy Foundation. The Keep Sweden Tidy Foundation is a non-profit organization striving to influence attitudes and behavior as part of working for sustainable development. The guide, entitled 'Moffles and men: A storyline about sustainable consumption' (Petri, 2008) is designed specifically for use in education for sustainable development, targeting children aged 6–11. Quite obviously, we are not dealing with an influential policy document but, instead, a specific example of how questions concerning the future are packaged and mediated in a concrete educational context. What is interesting about this document has less to do with its potential political impact or social significance and more to do with the fact that it allows for an informed glimpse into how ideas about the presumed human ability to shape the future are expressed in the discourse of education for sustainable development. By pointing out some perceivable patterns in this material, I aim to study the functions of hope and fear as tools for governing behaviors by opening up certain ways of thinking about and understanding the world while simultaneously blocking other ways.

Minor actions and major changes

While knowing that the future remains largely unknown, most people still struggle with a strong desire to control the course of events so that certain undesirable things will not happen. In a sense, this concerns the encounter between the concrete and the abstract as actions in the present are being confronted with an abstract fear of the future. The fear of the future is abstract insofar as it is grounded in doubts concerning the outcome of events to come. Nobody knows for sure what life will be like in the future but the fear that it will develop for the worse still appears to motivate preemptive actions in the present (Massumi, 2007). The concrete, in this context, is the action that is carried out in order to deal with the abstract threat. Thereby, an assumed causal relationship is established, linking seemingly insignificant actions in everyday life with the abstract threats that these actions are intended to combat. This may be understood in terms of what Susan McManus (2011) refers to as

a 'politics of fear'. The abstract fear of the end of the world functions by raising the level of emotional intensity, making people more susceptible to external influences. However, this abstract fear is given a direction only after it is connected with something concrete; something that creates an acting space so that the fear can be dealt with. For example, the act of shopping for ecological products in the grocery store can be understood, at least in part, in terms of a concretization of the abstract fear of the end of the world.

This is akin to what Brian Massumi (2007) identifies as 'the doctrine of preemption' which he argues underpinned military strategy in the United States during the administration of George W. Bush, and which constituted a logic of power that 'operates in the present on a future threat' 'in such as [sic] way as to make that present futurity the motor of its process' (p. 13). The key to understanding the doctrine of preemption, Massumi argues, is to recognize the sense in which it hinges on the notion of uncertainty. He notes:

> There is uncertainty because the threat has not only not yet fully formed but, according to Bush's opening definition of preemption, it has *not yet even emerged*. In other words, the threat is still indeterminately in potential. This is an ontological premise: the nature of threat cannot be specified. (Massumi, 2007, p. 13)

Similarly, the abstract fear of the end of the world, invoked in the context of education for sustainable development, appears to introduce a form of present futurity that functions by motoring the process of combating perceived threats in various concrete ways, while at the same time having 'the ontological status of indeterminate potentiality' (p. 13). This resonates with Massumi's military example insofar as 'the enemy is indeterminate, it is certain that he remain undetectable until he makes a move'. Precisely because of this, one would need to 'detect the movements, at as emergent a level as possible' (p. 16). This preemptive approach hints at the productive nature of fear (outlined in Nietzsche, 2008) where '[t]he most effective way to fight an unspecified threat is to actively contribute to *producing* it' (Massumi, 2007, p. 16).

Much of the contents of 'Moffles and men' revolve around the assumed connection between children's everyday behavior and the survival of the human species and the planet. It is stated, for example, that 'we need to acknowledge the connection between the choices we make in our everyday lives and their effects on the environment' (Petri, 2008, p. 4, my translation). The fear of the deteriorating condition of the global environment emerges as an abstract threat referred to in order to influence behavioral patterns and to govern the choices that children make in a certain direction. Lists of concrete suggestions of sustainable actions are being presented as a means by which to deal with the abstract threat of a future environmental disaster. In order to 'reduce the waste mountain and save resources' (Petri, 2008, p. 16, my translation), the pupils are presented with the following concrete suggestions:

- Think twice before you buy something new so that you don't end up buying something that you will regret.
- Ask your friends if they have what you are looking for laying around in the attic.
- Give away things to a flea market or a second-hand store when you want to get rid of something.
- Give away things that you have grown tired of as gifts to friends that may enjoy them.
- Make something new out of something old.
- Fix what is broken.

- Barter.
- Recycle the things that nobody wants (Petri, 2008, p. 16, my translation).

These concrete suggestions may be understood in terms of an attempt to establish a causal relationship between everyday choices and global processes of change. Seemingly mundane actions such as trading things with friends are thereby supplied with a sense of higher meaning and a distinct purpose in relation to a common goal to strive for; the goal of saving the planet by saving resources. By striving toward a common goal, a sense of agency is established as seemingly insignificant actions are being granted a greater value. These everyday actions are thereby turned into indispensable links in a long chain of events that come together and stretch into the future, creating an imagined safe passage through the uncertainty. The motivation for fixing what is broken, for instance, is not necessarily supplied by something concrete. What is broken should not necessarily be fixed because it is needed for a specific purpose in the present, but because of the risk that if it is left broken it will eventually contribute to the ever-growing waste mountain which, in a Swedish context, represents an abstract threat. The fear of a waste mountain that will grow beyond control in the near future is thereby transformed into a kind of manifestation of the abstract fear of the end of the world. It intensifies the situation and it makes pupils receptive to external influences that are targeted at something very specific: to fix broken things rather than throwing them away and to thereby contribute to the reduction of the waste mountain. As Massumi points out:

> Fear is the palpable action in the present of a threatening future cause. It acts just as palpably whether the threat is determinate or not. It weakens your resolve, creates stress, lowers consumer confidence, and may ultimately lead to individual and/or economic paralysis. To avoid the paralysis, which would make yourself even more of a target and carry the fear to even higher level, you must simply act. (Massumi, 2007, p. 18)

Hence, while the fear of the environmental disaster that the waste mountain comes to represent functions by intensifying the readiness to act, the hope that mundane actions can influence the capriciousness of nature functions as an emotional counterweight preventing a sense of utter despair. This illustrates the interdependency of hope and fear in the sense that one always seems to balance the other. Since no one actually knows for certain what the future will be like, ideas about how everyday actions relate to global processes of change will always be founded on 'what if . . .' types of arguments with a certain room for doubt.

Imagination as a point of departure

'Moffles and men' is based on a storyline – denoting a student interactive approach to teaching that utilizes the structure of a story – supplemented by different suggested exercises and discussion questions touching upon central themes such as consumption and sustainability. The narrative content of the material revolves around fantasy creatures called the moffles and their threatened existence in a forest where human littering is perceived to be a growing problem. The storyline is introduced by a letter from the moffles being sent to the class. In the letter, the moffles formulate a complaint to the pupils in the class, lamenting over the rapid deterioration of their natural habitat; a grove of trees. This deterioration is directly attributed to human littering and the effect on the lives of the moffles can be perceived quite clearly as they are no longer as happy as they used to be. The letter from the moffles may be interpreted in terms of nature itself – given a voice through the moffles – being

fed up with the apparent lack of responsibility displayed by humans. In this context, then, nature is being humanized and by creating an anthropomorphic image of nature it can be made to feel just like humans feel. Nature is imagined to be driven by emotions such as hope and fear and it is imagined to be endowed with a sense of right and wrong. Consequently, nature – as it is portrayed in the material – is conceived as a moral creature. Because nature is imagined to be oriented around the same moral values that humans have set for themselves, a human betrayal of nature is conceivable. By relying on one's imagination, it is possible to transform nature from a multitude of random sensory impressions, seemingly without any intrinsic moral order, to a kind of thinking and feeling entity in relation to which humans have a certain moral obligation. However, as Nietzsche warn us:

> Let us beware of attributing to it [the universe] heartlessness and unreason or their opposites: it is neither perfect nor beautiful, nor noble, nor does it wish to become any of these things; it does not by any means strive to imitate man. None of our aesthetic or moral judgments apply to it. (Nietzsche, 1974, p. 168)

In 'Moffles and men', the function of the imagination is significant in at least two different ways. In part, the imagination may be perceived as the instrument through which nature can be remodeled into a moral counterpart that can be successfully communicated and negotiated with. Nature is turned into a kind of mirror image of the self that is expected to behave and react in similar ways. The imagination can also be perceived as an instigator of thought processes that serve to generate concrete actions. In a section explaining storyline as an educational model based on student interaction, it is stated that 'Questions are often introduced with phrases like "how do you think that . . ." or "how do you imagine that . . .", enabling pupils to use their understanding and their imagination to come up with different answers' (Petri, 2008, p. 5, my translation). Accordingly, the imagination is construed to act as a bridge between different imagined scenarios and the concrete choices of the individual pupil. McManus (2011) approaches the role of the imagination vis-à-vis the emotion of hope in terms of a form of governance where the imagination is relied on to connect hopes about the future with concrete choices in the present through expectant expressions such as 'if I do this, then. . .'. She argues that while these hopeful constructions help determine the position of the individual in relation to a predetermined goal to strive for, at the same time they make it possible to assume that the autonomous actions and choices of the individual are decisive for controlling the outcome of future events. The future may still be uncertain, sometimes hopeful and sometimes threatening, but the individual pupil's ability to make informed decisions creates a kind of imagined shelter against what would otherwise risk leading to a state of despair.

Governing through participation and children's responsibility for the future: 'there are no right or wrong answers'

The image of the pupil that emerges in 'Moffles and men' is of a self-governing individual whose ability to imagine how certain types of behaviors will lead to certain types of consequences becomes decisive for the well-being of the individual and by extension for the progress of the human social world at large. This means that even if the individual pupil's ability to make autonomous choices is the focus of the material, the establishing of the framework allowing for these choices – that is, establishing which behaviors will lead to which consequences – is a political concern of considerable significance. To the extent that the notion that autonomous choices are related to the establishing of certain

possible and impossible choices, the shaping of autonomous individuals is a matter of governance (Foucault, 1981). Accordingly, learning to recognize which behaviors are considered 'sustainable' appears to be neither natural nor automatic but becomes a question of how to govern individuals so that their actions correspond with the rules of the overarching framework. In other words, governance through education for sustainable development is participatory. This is in line with the modern development of political governance at large. Hultqvist describes the shift from non-participatory to participatory governance as follows:

> The point of modern government is not primarily to restrain the subjects actions, but rather to bring about an exchange between the governors and the governed, i.e. a kind of participatory governing through which the individual is made to share the responsibility for the governing conditions of society. (Hultqvist, 2006, p. 23)

For the pupil – the intended recipient of 'Moffles and men' – this means that the primary purpose of the project is not to learn to recycle garbage simply because the teacher asserts that it is good for the environment, but to learn how to make 'sustainable' choices because these 'sustainable' choices are assumed to be directly linked with the well-being of the individual and the well-being of the natural environment. This, in turn, means that the pupil is not only responsible for his or her personal way of life but that the overall development of society is implicitly being founded on the personal choices of the individual pupil. This implies a kind of interaction between individual and society, where individual actions are understood in light of their significance for the greater good of the community. Working with storyline is thereby being intertwined with the work of 'preparing the pupils for becoming active and democratically trained citizens' (Petri, 2008, p. 6, my translation). Given that the responsibility for the common future of humankind may come across as too heavy a burden to bear for young children, a discussion concerning whether or not children can be held accountable for the actions of adults is instigated in the material.

> Be careful in the discussions so that children are not being blamed for routines and habits in their homes. Children have limited facilities to influence the behavior of adults and should not be made to feel responsible for these. Instead, this episode is about planting small seeds in the pupils so that they can, in a more conscious way, make their choices of consumption when they become adults. In order for a change in attitudes to be possible we have to start today. (Petri, 2008, p. 24, my translation)

In short, it becomes a question of a rather delicate balance between inculcating a sense of responsibility for the future of the world in the pupils while at the same time allowing them not to become weighed down by guilt caused by the bad habits of their parents and friends. One way of dealing with this potential dilemma is to confront pupils with different conceivable scenarios where they can make use of their imagination to make moral judgments in the context of so-called values exercises. This method is explicitly recommended in 'Moffles and men' together with the disclaimer that '[w]hat is important to remember when doing values exercises is that there are no right or wrong answers' (Petri, 2008, p. 25, my translation).

In order to return to the framework of participatory governance – that is, the question of what is morally possible and impossible to do and think in a given context – it appears necessary to dwell further on this assumption that 'there are no right or wrong answers'. As it stands, the very notion that individual actions are measurable in a moral sense is, as mentioned earlier, based on the assumption that there actually exists a right and a wrong answer in a stable sense. If it wasn't so, there would be nothing to guarantee the moral worth

of an action beyond the experience of the individual, which appears to be very arbitrary, often contradictory and in any case hardly generalizable. One way of making sense of the proposition that there are no right or wrong answers is to frame it within the notion that there is nothing external to the individual forcing him or her to make a specific decision; rather the decision must come from within, guided by training through, for example, values exercises. In this way, it makes sense that, further on in 'Moffles and men', suggestions of very concrete solutions to these supposedly open-ended questions are being presented to the pupils. For example: 'If you want to you can make your own "advertising-no thanks" signs made of cardboard. Each pupil can make several signs that they can proceed to hand out to those neighbors, relatives, and friends who are interested' (Petri, 2008, p. 27, my translation).

The relation between open-ended questions and what in a given context appear to be more or less predetermined answers is particularly interesting with regards to governance. Even if most people know that they can think and express themselves freely in a democratic society such as Sweden, they also know that some things are more or less unthinkable in a very practical sense. As Foucault (1981) reminds us 'We know quite well that we do not have the right to say everything, that we cannot speak of just anything in any circumstances whatever, and that not everyone has the right to speak of anything whatever' (p. 52). For instance, there does not appear to be any available room for resistance against the discourse of sustainable development in contemporary Sweden. That is, there is no legitimate position 'against' sustainable development since sustainable development is intimately linked with the prevailing notion of ethics in contemporary Swedish society. As a result, the external boundaries of the discourse of sustainable development become almost invisible. The 'other' that the discourse is defined against connotes negatively charged concepts such as wastefulness, irresponsibility, destructiveness, and selfishness. Consequently, the framework of the values exercises is constrained by tacit binaries such as sustainable/unsustainable, responsible/irresponsible, and productive/destructive; binaries that the pupil needs to identify and relate to as part of learning to navigate in the decision-making process. It is in relation to these conflicting notions that it becomes apparent that an inner struggle between competing drives and impulses is being staged within the material.

Controlling one's desire

People's hopes and fears do not only concern a felt lack of control over the external world but are very much related to a felt lack of control over the internal world as well. The struggle between need and desire, for instance, is assumed to take place within humans rather than outside of them. In 'Moffles and men', the discussion concerning need versus desire is given a central position in relation to the perceived problem of unsustainable consumption patterns. On the one hand, the problem of consumption still concerns concrete actions insofar as the desire to consume is understood in terms of a dangerous external impulse making people consume more than they actually need. In this sense, the solution to the problem is fairly straightforward and can be summarized as follows: 'In order to decrease consumption rather than increasing it, it is important that the pupils do not buy new shirts' (Petri, 2008, p. 18, my translation). On the other hand, it becomes apparent from the context that this is a short-term solution and that in order to address the problem in a more long-term sense one needs to identify its primary cause within the human being. Consequently, it becomes a matter of being able to identify 'where our desire for new things derives from' (Petri, 2008, p. 9, my translation) in order to understand that it is constructed rather than natural and in order to be able to influence what is perceived as the unsustainable behavioral patterns

of contemporary pupils. In the material, the desire for new things is construed as a Late Modern phenomenon. Subsequently, the desire for new things is depicted as something that we humans – up until quite recently – have been able to control, and that in order to regain control over it we need to look for clues in our past.

> In order to understand that the desire for many things can be constructed it is good to take a retrospective view. [. . .] The pupils can be given the assignment to interview an older person, such as a grandmother or a grandfather, in order to find out what kind of things they had when they were children and what they played with. What did it look like in the toy store when grandma was a child? Was she happy despite the fact that she had fewer things than most children today? (Petri, 2008, p. 25, my translation)

It is clear from this quote that the desire we are concerned with here is conceived in terms of a lack that people try to compensate for by procuring more and more unnecessary things in a fruitless pursuit of a kind of happiness that in any case appears to have very little to do with material wealth. The answer we are expected to arrive at appears to be quite clear from the beginning: yes, of course grandma was happy even though she didn't have any of the 'unsustainable' toys that children have today. Hope, in this case, is not only directed at a distant future full of good decisions but, in addition, at an equally distant and inaccessible past that comes to represent the belief that people have let themselves become seduced by their own desires and that they have lost track of 'the good life'. This, in turn, causes a kind of conscious striving to return to that which has been lost. Questions such as 'What do you think you need in order to survive and have a good life?' (Petri, 2008, p. 24, my translation) then serve as a kind of corrective to be utilized in order to remind oneself of what is important in an eternal sense and to distinguish this from what is transient and therefore unimportant in the grand scheme of things. Again, it becomes clear that education for sustainable development may be perceived in terms of a predominately moral discourse. Here, 'Moffles and men' appears to be aligned with emotional literacy curricula identified by Boler (1997), because it focuses on advocating 'behavioral modification' (p. 208) as a means by which to gain control over one's drives and impulses for the sake of achieving a sense of moral stability. Individual actions or individual thoughts are not evaluated according to how they appear or what they do in a specific context, but according to how well they coincide with common goals. Accordingly, it becomes less interesting to find out how something makes you feel in a given moment and more interesting to find out to what extent something brings you closer to or further from the aspired-for ideal. Since humans lack the ability to change their past or to influence their future in any controlled sense, however, this striving for something different is constantly plagued by the fear of failure or the various risks of the future.

Conclusion: the future as risk and the productivity of fear

In 'Moffles and men', an image of the enormous risks posed by the future emerges quite clearly. The possible consequences that threaten the planet due to human overconsumption are taken to be so grave that they can be directly linked with its very survival. For understandable reasons, then, the hope and fear that these images of the future allude to are intensified. It becomes clear that much is at stake and that should the individual person not begin to change his or her behavioral patterns right now it may very well be too late to do so tomorrow. In fact, the hope of another day, parallel with the fear that it will not arrive, appears to supply the discourse of education for sustainable development with its principle

driving force. This may be understood to be its most productive characteristic; using hope and fear as instruments for governing and shaping desirable citizens that in turn give shape to the desirable society. The problem appears to be that once we turn to our hopes and fears for guidance, they do not seem to relinquish control over our lives. That is, the technologies put into play in order to manage and control our fears may in fact be understood to be the very technologies that produce the same. As such, it concerns a productive process that keeps regenerating itself. For example, Minton (2009) describes how Late Modern practices established to manage the collective fears of people – such as gated communities, new and more efficient security technologies, the fencing of public spaces, etc. – often has had the unintended effect of fuelling people's fears of increasing crime rates and urban insecurity. As Nikolas Rose remarks apropos the pervasiveness of what he labels the logic of risks:

> The incompleteness, fragmentation and failure of risk assessment and risk management is no threat to such logics, merely a perpetual incitement for the incessant improvement of systems, generation of more knowledge, invention of more techniques, all driven by the technological imperative to tame uncertainty and master hazard. (Rose, 1999, p. 260)

Accordingly, fear becomes productive and as Nietzsche (2008) points out, fear may be understood to be a necessary incentive for a morality whose most distinguishing feature perhaps is to assist people in dealing with their common fears of the future.

Returning to the question of what is required to understand education for sustainable development, 'Moffles and men' can give us some insights into what appears to be some necessary preconditions, which I have attempted to account for in this article. The assumed connection between concrete actions and abstract fears appears to be crucial for making sense of the notion that humans have the ability to control their future. This, in turn, implies that we rely on our imagination to link together individual and everyday decisions with global processes of change using the instruments of hope and fear. The humanization of nature is another notion that appears to be of some importance for casting the discourse in its moral form. That is, if nature is treated as a thinking and feeling entity with the ability to judge, it can be turned into something recognizable and predictable from a human point of view. Insofar as the problems connected with the future concern its inherent unpredictability, the humanization of nature tends to make the future appears a little bit more manageable and predictable. In addition, as the internal world often appears to be just as unpredictable and irrational as the external world, human drives and inclinations are also subjected to the same kind of adjustment according to the striving for common goals. Inclinations and desires that do not immediately conform to the greater goal of sustainability are treated as problems to be trained away in an effort to suppress the fear of the uncontrollable (cf. Boler, 1997). Again, this is a means of doing away with possible threats that are assumed to be looming somewhere just out of reach, either in the future or in some distant part of the world. This striving for a working model that can facilitate the shaping of people capable of predicting and managing future threats appears to be central for the discourse of education for sustainable development. It makes for a framework where changes in the present are being instigated while the gaze is ever fixed at the distant future.

It is in the concrete work to produce changes in the present that the productivity of fear is most noticeable. By shaping and influencing people's behaviors in their everyday life, the productive role of the fears that give rise to different moral incitements is made tangible. The fear of a growing waste mountain not only affects different political discourses, but it helps create a moral framework relating to everyday actions, no matter how small and

insignificant they may seem. Perhaps, however, these seemingly insignificant and mundane actions present us with an opportunity to study the geography of power at work. If so, then studies of the ways in which power operates in everyday life may be understood in terms of important studies of the conditions of the human social world. As Foucault remarked: 'It must be possible to do the history of the state on the basis of men's [sic] actual practice, on the basis of what they do and how they think' (2007, p. 358).

Having endeavored to carry out such a study, by looking at a practical example from the discourse of education for sustainable development, I hope to have shown how moral notions regarding humanity's desire to influence the outcome of future events have traveled from a traditional religious discourse – where humanity is regulating a debt to God so as to secure a better position in the afterlife – to a secular discourse – where humanity is regulating a debt to nature so as to secure the future of humankind. Employing the emotions of hope and fear as tools of governance, the discourse of education for sustainable development makes use of a technology described by Spinoza as an effective way of manipulating people by way of their superstitions and their irrational fears of future disasters. I would argue that studying the discourse from this point of view helps provide a better understanding of the moral driving forces behind future-oriented projects such as education for sustainable development. This understanding may, in turn, allow for an educational discussion less prone to incite immediate action and more geared toward the careful study of human behaviors and power geographies.

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