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MAKING EDUCATION A BLUE OCEAN FOR THE MALAY-POLYNESIAN COMMUNITIES: SOME THEORIES, POETRIES, AND INITIATIVES

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Introduction

Life itself is a ‘blue ocean’ with many opportunities, happenings, and activities in the environment and communities surrounding us. Individuals seek opportunities to improve themselves day after day, year after year. Individuals are taught, by the informal and formal ways from the very young age until the very old age, to find better pathways to improve their condition. On the contrary also, individuals are taught to avoid the ‘red ocean,’ one that is bloody with many conflicts, battles, and sorrows.

Civilizations have advanced, societies have evolved, and paradigms have changed from time to time. Civilizations have advanced from the Stone Age to the Metal Age to the Silicon Age and now to the Digital Age. Societies, cultures, and technologies have evolved according to the temper of advancement of the civilizations. Ideas, perspectives, and values about life have changed also, from the cave mentality to global mentality, from the parochial and isolationist mentality to liberal universalist mentality. Communication and human dispersal have changed also, from slow to fast. But where are we? Are we just merely the followers and consumers, or are we the leaders and pioneers? In which part of the ocean are we? Or do we have an ocean to ourselves? Let us ponder and get some answers to the questions. Let us be leaders and pioneers in many ways and create a few blue oceans to ourselves. Let us plan and design a better future for our posterity. Together we can make it.
Relevant Theories of Progress and Societal Advancements

Theoretically speaking, there are three main theories in operation for the conceptualization described above: 1. the theory of frontier expansion, 2. the theory of social Darwinism, and 3. the theory of change and competition.

The theory of frontier expansion has been well-documented in human history ever since the early civilizations until the most current civilizations today. Human beings have forever engaged in the pursuit of happiness, in whatever forms that may be. The strong kingdoms and empires in the past have conquered and ruled the smaller, weaker kingdoms and territories with the intention of seeking wealth, power, and supremacy—the elements thought to bring about happiness in the ultimate sense.

The Greek, Roman, Egyptian, Aztec, Indian, Chinese, Persian, Mongolian, British, French, Spanish, Russian, Japan, Malay, and Polynesian histories have all documented conquer and conquest of new territories and colonies, all in the pursuit of happiness, wealth, power, and supremacy. Among the personalities of human history were the pharaohs and cleopatras of Egypt, the emperors of Rome, Greece, Persia, and China, and the kings of smaller nations. The most notable historical figures that had travelled and conquered half the globe were Alexander, Genghis Khan, Kublai Khan, Ottoman caliphs, and Hitler. The main paradigm that controlled the minds of the historical personalities was that the vastness of land is necessary for empire building—vast land, vast resources, vast wealth, vast power, vast kingdom. Even today this paradigm still operates in the minds of leaders of imperialist nations, but the new frontiers will be the moon, stars, and galaxies i.e. the pursuit of a galactical empire. This is the first part of the theory of frontier expansion.

The second part of this theory is religious and spiritual frontier expansion. In religion, prophets had emerged as the savior of mankind from moral, ethical, cultural, and spiritual crises and decadences. Hinduism, Zoroasterism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Christianity, and Islam all have prophets, who have laid the principles and rules of jurisprudence, purity, piety, and harmony in life that have expanded into human communities in all corners of the world. All these come along with the realization that the vastness of
Empires and wealth is still not the ultimate guarantee for human happiness. Moral, ethical, cultural, and spiritual decadences are the evils that can rip apart happiness and harmony. Today, we still can see the priests and propagators of religions going around the world doing the hard job of correcting evil doings of human beings—besides the judges in courts. At this juncture, human beings learned that the pursuit of happiness must not be in material forms only, but must include civil and spiritual components.

Now, the third part of this theory is the expansion of culture and knowledge frontiers. We are all in this part today. We in the Malay-Polynesian community must gear up our efforts in strengthening our cultural roots as well as expanding our collaborative ventures in scientific knowledge, by harnessing all the resources we have in hand. This is not for confronting the surge of Mcdonaldism and Hollywoodism culture in the world, but more of leaving behind a strong legacy and pride of who we are as the people of the Malay-Polynesian region, who have a strong cultural foundation and artistic treasures. Also, we are not in the business of competing with the advanced countries in scientific knowledge production, but we form many joint-venture programs for advancing the knowledge and skills of our youth so that they can get a wider employment and business opportunities and enrich the Malay-Polynesian region. This is our new frontier, which we have forgotten or not realized so far!

What areas of the knowledge frontier that we must expand? Our youth must indulge in developing their technological skills in areas such as banking and finance, ship and boat building, marine and maritime engineering, architecture and construction, automotive design and repair, hospitality, fishery and deep-sea fishing for export, food processing, and property market. We have the universities and the expertise to advance our cause, and we have the sponsors which will benefit themselves if they invest. We have the different bases in different countries to locate the polytechnics and universities which we want to build. Let us plan which country to host and advance the higher education institutions of their preference. We can even have a big cruise ship as a floating university, one that is so unique for our youth to master many skills, arts, and businesses.

Our new frontiers, namely culture and knowledge frontiers, are the new spheres that people around the world are going for. People are so tired of living in a fast-pace life, which has a lot
of stress and pressure, and thus they want to relax and enjoy culture and arts. Culture and arts are for refreshing the mind, body, and soul, taking away all the tensions and stress inside human beings.

*Arts and culture is a new form of investment and source of wealth*
*It is not only for entertainment, but for exploring and expanding self-refinement and beauty*
*It is not only for others to enjoy, but for us to cherish and remember our thinking, grace, and beauty*
*We must not glorify what we do not have and that belongs to others*
*We must not cherish other people’s arts, literature, crafts, and histories; thus, we must create and recreate what we have the best to offer.*
*Therefore, our youth must take this opportunity to expand their artistic and intellectual talents at the highest level so that they can become the master artisans and craftsmen of the future, to be admired by future generations and scholars.*
*Life is a many splendored things; no single way of doing the right things*
*Let us not abandon what we have in our cultures and arts*
*Let us be proud of who we are and what we have*
*Let us form a beneficial fraternity on a large scale*
*The Maori leaders in New Zealand can be the reformer and pioneer in this arena*

}*Poetry for us, Part 1, March 2014, SH*

The second theory mentioned before was *social Darwinism theory*. This theory posits that life is metaphorically a vicious jungle, and thus all creatures must develop adaptive capacities to face the harsh challenges and dangers in order to survive and prosper. *Life is about survival of the fittest.* Societies that are slow to adapt and harness the changes and new opportunities are the ones that will perish slowly, while societies that are fast to adapt and capture new developments are the ones that will prosper. Societies that are disintegrated and deprived from getting the resources will live unhealthy, while societies that are united and share resources will become strong and have sustainability. So, let us unite and share our resources and expertise to forge a new era of development for the Malay-Polynesian region and for our posterity.

With regards to this affair, the business corporations and social associations in the Malay-Polynesian region should have joint-venture treaties and agreements. This is the starting point. Then we can start opening many kinds of businesses, can start buying-selling the products that we have, and have polytechnics and universities for our youth of different
nations to study together. Certainly we will face constraints, barriers, and conflicts, but these are part of life negotiations.

We want to see ships owned by Maoris, Sri Lankans, and Fijians to trade goods in Malaysia, Philippines, Indonesia, and South Africa.
We want to see banks and finance companies to invest with the Maoris, Malays, Polynesians, Philipines, and Fijians.
We want to see our youth to explore new some natural resources in the Malay-Polynesian region and share and sustain the wealth together.
We want to see cars, tractors, boats, and ships made by countries in the Malay-Polynesian region.
We want to eat the sea foods together.
We want to shine the gem stones together.
We want to learn all skills together.
We can harness the wind energy together.
And together we will make things possible.
Exceeding the social Darwinism theory

[Poetry for us, Part 2, March 2014, SH]

Where is the critical focal point for riding the waves of social Darwinism? The answer is education and training. We must have universities and polytechnics to carry out our mission. They are important for training the minds and hands of our youth to be leaders, pioneers, technologists, artisans, scientists, and professionals in the future. The universities and polytechnics will remain for thousand years to carry out our vision and mission, even after we here have all passed away and gone into oblivion. We need bankers, financiers, and philanthropists to build universities and polytechnics to materialize those noble vision and mission, and we will triumph par excellence in social Darwinism paradigm.

Now, third is the theory of change and competition. If we want to race, make sure we run fast like the cheetah; if we want to jump, make sure we jump far and high like the swordfish; if we want to swim, make sure we swim like the dolphin; if we want to fly, make sure we fly like the sparrow. We must have the stamina, features, intelligence, and passion to be what we want to be and to win a race. We cannot change and compete if we sit in the same position. To change, we must engage ourselves in answering the following questions.
• What are the new dreams, goals, and directions?
• What are our strengths and weaknesses?
• What the threats and opportunities?
• What are the guiding principles and theories?

After finding the answers to these questions, then only we can make a smart strategic change; otherwise we will land into a lot troubles.

I have a dream
That one day we will have the United Nations of Malay-Polynesia
Where our oceans and seas are blue
For us to savor its beauty, tranquility, and prosperity
For our children to swim and play together
For our youth to learn and work together

I have a dream
That one day we will have the University of Malay Polynesia
Traversing the oceans and seas in the region
Picking up our youth and turn them into leaders, professors, scientists, artisans, and craftsmen
Making them pioneers and builders
Making them know, share, and care for each other
Elevating them into a higher level of civility and morality
Undaunted by the evils of corruption, crimes, and abuses

I have a dream
That one day we will have the Corporations of Malay-Polynesia
For us to anchor and coordinate our various businesses
For us to share the benefits and profits
For our posterity and the rest of the world

I have a dream
That one day we will have the Biannual Festival of Malay Polynesia
For us to showcase the works of inventors, artisans, poets, and craftsmen
Thus enriching our inventions and creative works
As a remembrance of our cultures and arts
And for our youth to harness new ideas, knowledge, and technologies
And to shape new paradigms of humanity

[Poetry for us, Part III, March 2014, SH]
Harnessing the Winds and Depths of the Blue Ocean

Our great forefathers had been the creed of people who were seafaring fishermen, traders, and explorers. Either by design or fate, they had journeyed half of the globe, from South-east Asia to South Africa and Hawaii. Some of them were very knowledgeable in harnessing the winds in navigation that they managed to go back and forth from the original seaports, but some of them had been lost and landed on the many islands of the Indian Ocean, South China Sea, and Pacific Ocean and thus formed new settlements. Today, we are so fortunate to meet each other again and share our experiences and sentiments. We are the lost generations and cousins of our great seafaring forefathers.

Let us now share and continue the vision of our great forefathers, i.e. in harnessing the power of the winds for our development. The Malay-Polynesian region has many islands and shores which no other regions in the world have. Thus, we have abundant supply of wind power to generate enough electricity for our consumption, or for export to other regions. Engineers and technologists in our region must pursue and advance electricity generation using the wind power, which is cheap, clean, and green. No pollution, no waste materials, and no need to sink lands into lakes.

Next is harnessing the wind for sailing within the Malay-Polynesian region, either for trade or for sports. Here, we need boat-building knowledge and skills as well as navigational skills. Therefore, we need polytechnics to teach our youth about boat-building, navigation, telecommunications, and marina construction. Every country in the region should have one or more boat-building polytechnics. Post-secondary boys and girls, with minimal qualifications, may enroll in the polytechnics. I believe that in a decade we will be able to see a lot of our youth sailing among the countries in the region, and more importantly develop businesses dealing with sailing boats and ships. Bankers and financiers are instrumental in this area of investment, which has a big multiplier effect i.e. one business can generate ten other businesses.
Oh winds of the oceans  
Blow the sails  
I fancy going into the horizon  
Bring me to the shores of my ancestral brothers and sisters  
To see the beautiful sunset and sunrise  
To savor their arts and cultures  
To dance and sing with them  

Oh winds of the oceans  
Blow the sails  
I fancy expanding the horizon of knowledge  
Help me to educate and train my fellow brothers and sisters  
In the far away islands and villages  
To learn new trades and skills  
To enable them prosper and live in abundance  

[Poetry for us, Part IV, March 2014, SH]

The next frontier that could offer human beings many new awakenings, knowledge, and resources is the ocean depths and floors, which constitute 70 percent of the earth’s mass. For thousands of years human beings have been taking and tapping food resources from the seas and oceans, and little that we know about its reserves, mystery, ecology, biology, physics, geology, and chemistry. Little do we know also that we are affecting the oceans and seas in many ways, especially due to our carelessness and irresponsibility, pollutants and toxic wastes have been dumped into the oceans and seas, our greatest water and food reserves and the great stabilizer of the world climate.

If the seas and oceans have taken care of human beings, then we should, in return, care for the seas and oceans. We should have universities and colleges studying about the seas and oceans, and thus generating new knowledge and technologies about the seas and oceans. Possible areas of studies are:

- Marine science (biology, chemistry, physics)
- Marine geology and mineralogy
- Marine aquaculture and food production
- Marine ecology and conservation
- Marine pharmaceutical production
- Marine engineering
• Marine tourism and hospitality (oceanic theme parks)
• Marine photography and arts
• Marine sports

I would like to suggest here that the marine universities and colleges be located in the country islands of Micronesia, Polynesia, New Zealand, Sri Lanka, and Indonesia. Government and private corporations are encouraged to establish this particular kind of universities and colleges. As a starting point, the first few batches of students may be sponsored by governments of the Malay-Polynesian region.

Conclusion

I really hope that this brief paper serves as the seminal point for government and private corporations to start a new direction of profitable investments, not only in terms monetary but also in the expansion of culture, arts, literature, science, sports, and international relations. Let us expand the many frontiers of knowledge and life together, by our own ingenuity, expertise, skills, and economic resources. We must have meetings, agreements, plans, and strategies to manifest our new vision of a better future for our children and grand children.

Bibliography


