

Book Review of *Educating for the Anthropocene: Schooling and Activism in the Face of Slow Violence*¹

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Anthropologist Peter Sutoris's (2022) *Educating for the Anthropocene: Schooling and activism in the face of slow violence* overlaps comparative education, environmental anthropology, and international development studies. Sutoris (2022) focuses on pedagogies for reimagining ecological futures. His book offers a timely and compelling explanation of how the education system should evolve in response to the global environmental crisis. The book is grounded in solid ethnographic work among two Global South communities contextualized as frontlines of the "high Anthropocene" (Sutoris, 2022, p. 10). The book explains how education can prepare humans for life in an era that transcends apolitical knowledge transmission, calling for education to cultivate empathy, conviviality, and inspire activism as a means for radical environmental action. The book brings into conversation important scholars, including Paulo Freire (1970) and Rob Nixon's book *Slow Violence* (2017).

At the heart of *Educating for the Anthropocene* is the message that education about the environment can be enhanced through radical imaginaries- creating political subjects that give agency to young people as activists and changemakers. Instead of obsessing about economic growth, education can help young people grasp and confront the crisis through the lens of local society, culture, and politics. Sutoris (2022) proposes that activism should be central to education and that activists should be recognized as educators. This shift is critical to imagining a better future. The book advocates for an interdisciplinary curriculum from Science to Humanities that will empower students to understand environmental issues and act prudently. The book challenges the polarization of environmental education taking place through Environmental and Sustainability Education (ESE), focusing on two ethnographic case studies. Such analysis shows how education should be refashioned and repoliticized. As Sutoris (2022) states, "this book, then, is an ethnographic exploration of schooling and activism in relationship to slow violence in the context of intergenerational legacies of colonialism, racism, and environmental degradation" (p. 10).

As an educationist trained in ethnography, Sutoris (2022) peeks into the life narratives of children and activists in India and South Africa confronted by pollution, toxic waste, legacies of colonialism and racism, big dams, and postcolonial development. Using critical pedagogy as a framework, Sutoris (2022) advocates for education as a transformative process, an act of dialogue that triggers social change. His engagement with activists and children in Pashulok (India) and Wentworth (South Africa) presents a dialogical exchange with young people who call for social and environmental justice through creative collaborative ethnographic practices like

¹ Sutoris, P. (2022). *Educating for the Anthropocene: Schooling and activism in the face of slow violence*. MIT Press.

filmmaking (visual anthropology) combined with oral interviews. Through the case studies and life histories, Sutoris (2022) makes a compelling case for bridging schooling and activism in education for the Anthropocene.

A strength of the book is its use of diverse case studies illustrating the depoliticizing effects of mainstream schooling. Stories use powerful images and narratives to describe how the slow violence of dispossessions and displacement caused by the construction of the Tehri Dam shapes environmental action in the Himalayan region vis-a-vis industrial pollution in South Africa. The case studies highlight how environmental education in the Global South is framed as a tool for awareness-raising and to address social justice, community cohesion, and activism.

The book is ethnographically rich with illustrative photographs and vignettes. Several education systems in the Global North remain heavily focused on neoliberal pedagogic practices, standardized testing in curriculum design, which often hinders the integration of transdisciplinary, activist-driven approaches to learning. A more in-depth analysis of how Sutoris's ideas could inform educational policy and practice in these contexts would strengthen the book's transregional impact on ESE studies. The book offers a clearer path toward implementing his anthropological vision for educating in the age of anthropocene across diverse cultural settings, given the fact that climate change is a global and local phenomenon.

Sutoris (2022) pays attention to traditional ecological knowledge (TEK), documenting efforts to integrate Indigenous ecological knowledge into formal education and schools. The book ties ecological education to the broader conversation about decolonizing education, resonating with Global South decolonial and post-colonial scholars such as Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) and Ivan Illich (1971), who argue for the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives in our pedagogic practice through deschooling mainstream education and through tools of conviviality. Exploring these alternative knowledge systems and the power of activism, Sutoris (2022) opens up important discussions about the role of education in revitalizing Indigenous ecological practices and challenging colonial violence and the hegemony created by the Eurocentric industrialization-based growth and high modernist development agenda. The book also brings into conversation the writings of important Global South voices such as Ashish Nandy (2015), who speaks about the decolonization of the mind and its importance in revitalizing education that focuses on important questions of equity, environmental, and intergenerational social justice issues.

In its concluding chapter, Sutoris (2022) advocates three apparatuses for education in the age of the Anthropocene. The radical imagination focuses on the possibility of care and conviviality beyond bureaucratization and depolarization of environmental issues. He advocates for agonistic pluralism wherein the scope for bringing into conversation opposing worldviews is possible. Thirdly, he proposes the question of intergenerational dialogue, focusing on ecological and environmental debt that we owe to our future generation and our responsibility toward the care and stewardship of our environment. Sutoris (2022) concludes with the observation that "there is a

finite earth threatened by humanity's thrust for infinite growth- and that is why we need to talk about educating for the Anthropocene" (p. 208).

Equally significant is Sutoris's (2022) emphasis on retraining teachers with a political vision that embodies activism and grassroots action from schools that lends agency to young people and a voice to challenge the depolarization carried out by the state. He envisions educators not simply as knowledge transmitters but as facilitators of critical dialogue and reflection on ecological issues that are environmental, social, and political. Schools, he argues, must create spaces where students can engage deeply with the ethical and practical implications of ecological crises. ESE should prioritize creativity, sensitivity, and conviviality to prepare educators to navigate the complexities of teaching and learning in the Anthropocene.

Educating for the Anthropocene is a well-timed and stimulating book, making a case for the reimagining of education in the face of the global challenges created by human greed and capitalist high modernization. Through his advocacy for empathy, care, and conviviality, Sutoris (2022) reflects on the role of education in fostering critical pedagogy, interdisciplinary learning, and activism. Stories offer a hopeful vision for how education can contribute to addressing the crises of the Anthropocene. While the book contributes to the field of environmental anthropology and critical pedagogic studies, its scope is limited to a thick descriptive account and in-depth case study rather than broad generalization for framing education policy.

As an advocate of degrowth and alternative environmental activism, Sutoris (2022) invites educators, changemakers, and activists to rethink the role of education by focusing on what and how they teach, the book offers a persuasive, ethnographically rich chronicle with activism at the heart of agonistic pluralism capable of confronting the environmental challenges ahead.

Debojyoti Das is an anthropologist and geographer by training with a research focus on the Global South and a strong commitment to sustainability education. With over ten years of experience in teaching, research, and academic scholarship in the United Kingdom higher education sector, Das has worked to embed sustainability principles into both curriculum design and student engagement. Das has designed and led summer schools, field trips, and interdisciplinary workshops that integrate critical pedagogy with sustainability themes, encouraging students to explore global and local challenges through multimedia projects and experiential learning. Das believes in practice-based, 'learning-by-doing' approaches, which have proven effective in deepening students' understanding of complex environmental, sustainability, and development issues.

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