

SP - (18768) - THE SERPENT UNDER THE INNOCENT FLOWER

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Short Abstract

In this presentation, I shall engage in a critique of the EU's promotion of Lifelong Learning which is a far cry from UNESCO's earlier promotion of Lifelong Education. While UNESCO then promoted an expansive notion of learning, attaching importance to different forms of education such as popular education and other types of non-formal learning, a reflection of the left wing core of writers gravitating around the concept, the EU accommodated a very reductionist labour market view of Lifelong learning. I argue that this concept is used in a neoliberal fashion. UNESCO then had a third world orientation with the old Soviet Union a key stakeholder and emphasis was placed on literacy campaigns in revolutionary or post independence states. It was a different global scenario then from that which surrounded the EU's promotion of Lifelong learning. I argue for a more expansive conceptualisation of education which sees people as relational beings, relational to not only other humans but the rest of Nature in which humans are rooted. Quite intriguing is the UN's promotion of Lifelong learning for sustainable development, which if taken seriously requires an overhaul of the EU's 1990+economistic baggage asking questions regarding Lifelong learning to produce what, how and for whom and at what cost to Planet Earth?