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CHANGING EDUCATION: A NOTE ON THE “ORIGINAL AND UNUSUAL” WORLDVOICE, WORLDVIEW, AND

Introduction

If you want to bring about changes in educational practices or thinking, Jan Comenius and Savitribai Phule may be surprisingly helpful. In

Arend van Leeuwen

Some half a century ago, van Leeuwen (1964) described the meaning and spirit of the great ancient civilizations in comparison with and in contradistinction to the biblical-prophetic and Greek rational strains which created a unique phenomenon in Western civilization. His summary was that "the pattern of the ontocratic state, the basic pattern of the four earliest centers of Eurasian civilization [Mesopotamia, Egypt, India, and China], persisted without interruption for thousands of years and spread far and wide" (p. 173).

Rooted in "primordial and primitive ideas," "ancient traditions" persisted in a "self-same theme" regardless of geo-specific adaptations, following the same "main principles," and producing "the same basic pattern" socially, the ontocratic state (van Leeuwen, 1964, pp. 157, 164, 173). The common triadic components were (1) a universal idea, (2) "very ancient religious insights" and philosophical speculations "belonging to the common Eurasian stock," and (3) subtle and varied material and social iterations (Corduanubtsocial triad -23 (Leeuwen) -2cial pp. 157,

appearance. Four maxims frame his threefold method (pp. 84-114).

Maxim One. A world hypothesis is determined by its root metaphor. From that root metaphor, that clue to comprehension, grows the world hypothesis frame (Pepper, 1970, pp. 96-98). It is the same metaphor, Pepper explains, which creates the like developments or statements across centuries and cultures:

> The theories of Thales, Anaximenes, Empediocles, Telesio, and Spencer are all one world theory, because they all derived from one root metaphor. The statements of the theory may differ in the degree of refinement of the categories, in terminology, in emphasis on certain details, in omission of some details, and even in omission of some basic categories. Still, all these statements will be reckoned as statements of one world theory in that they are all generated from and related to a single root metaphor. (p. 96)

Maxim Two. Each world hypothesis is autonomous. Starting with different roots, the system grows different ways of comprehending and living (pp. 98-104). Thus, the world theories "have no difficulty in explaining each other's errors" (p. 100).

Maxim Three. Eclecticism is confusing (pp. 104-113). This maxim follows from the second, for "if world hypotheses are autonomous, they are mutually exclusive. A mixture of them, therefore, can only be confusing" (p. 104).

Some may assert that all world hypotheses are saying the same thing, arriving eventually at the same philosophical mountain top. But Pepper is firm. "More perspicuously," through a careful "study of their factual conflicts, their diverse categories, their consequent differences of factual corroboration, and—in a word—their distinct root metaphors . . . we become aware of their mutual exclusiveness" (pp. 104-105).

Maxim Four. Concepts which have lost contact with their root metaphors are empty abstractions (pp. 113-114). Here, Pepper's study of the past takes on a prophetic dimension:

> This fault is one stage worse than eclecticism, and is very likely to grow out of it. When a world theory grows old and stiff people "begin to take its categories and subcategories for granted and presently forget where in fact these come from, and assume that these have some intrinsic and ultimate cosmic value in themselves." (p. 113)

Samir Amin

Samir Amin (2011) is an Afro-Asian observer, a "deliberate globalist," Muslim, radical economist with an intense analytical mind. His intellectual vision is to emphasize the "unequalled power of Marx's method . . . in the analysis of global history" (p. 10). Amin does so in spite of and without reference to Marxism's documented record of unparalleled mass

murders, reprehensible immoralities, unconscionable inhumanity, and

(Johnstone, 2009; Pellegrino, 1995; Wolf, 2012). As Pellegrino (1995) points out, notions of "virtuous" and "virtuous persons" are universal constructs:

> Every culture has a notion of a virtuous person—i.e., a paradigm person, real or idealised, who sets standards of noble conduct for a culture and whose character traits exemplify the kind of person others in that culture ought to be or to emulate. (p. 225)

Three leading contemporary worldvoice contenders are Jesus, Buddha, and Mohammad. And across history, only a paradigmatic few have remained rather constant: Shaman, Moses, Buddha, Confucius, Socrates, Jesus, and Mohammad (Freedman & McClymond, 2001; Gooch, 1997; Jaspers 1953, 1962; Kreeft, 2002; Lewis, 2003; Smart, 2000a; Wolf, 1975, 2001). They are autonomous, mutually exclusive, and are not all saying the same thing (Pepper, 1970; Prothero, 2011; Stark, 2008).

Worldvoice, then, is the defining allegiance given to the ideal and exemplar person who embodies ideal personhood to a very high or perhaps even to the highest degree—usually beyond what normal people can attain to in organizing and conducting their lives (Johnstone, 2009; Wolf, 2011; and see aspects and themes of moral exemplars by Blum, 1988; Oliner, 2007; Pellegrino, 2007; Pellegrino & Thomasma, 1996; Walker & Ivanhoe, 2007).

University of Helsinki's Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen remembers his childhood in Finland. His father enthusiastically told him about new engines for cars and airplanes. The original blueprint or model from which the actual engines would be produced, his father called a prototype. And his father was emphatic: the closer the product approximates the prototype, the better the engine.

For that picture, Kärkkäinen (2012) explains the position accorded to Jesus as a paradigmatic exemplar, a worldvoice: "Jesus, the revelation of God, is the prototype. He is the only one among us who faithfully and perfectly represents what God, the Creator, wished for the human person, created in his image, to be" (p. 30).

As the prototype person, then, Jesus is seen by Kärkkäinen as the blueprint of perfection by which others model their lives, the exemplar and virtuous person. And as such, Jesus is the paradigm person who forms the root metaphor; he is the primordial person for emulation.

The question that must always be asked is: Who is the prototype person for a thinker or leader or society? Is it Krishna, Mohammad, Buddha, or Jesus? Those virtús are each autonomous, mutually exclusive. They are not all saying the same thing (Wolf, 2009; Prothero, 2011; Stark, 2008). But if you can locate that prototype person, you have

touched the core of the system of thought, as well as the social trajectory.

David Noel Freedman, Professor of History at the University of California, San Diego, uses Genesis' five Rivers of Paradise as a "metaphoric and parabolic . . . model or pattern for the great personality religions of the world" (Freedman & McClymond, p. 23). In a manner somewhat similar to Amin's civilizational tributaries systems, Freedman charts the rivers metaphoric model as separate streams through history that can be summarized and correlated by their "founding father," "sacred scriptures" and writings, and "religion" (Freedman & McClymond, 2001, p. 8). He points to Moses, Buddha, Confucius, Jesus, and Muhammad as source initiators of the Great-Person Rivers that continue to feed the planet's majority worldview and worldvenue life-river basins (see The Great-Person Rivers Chart).

THE GREAT-PERSON RIVERS CHART

Freedman and McClymond (2001) also remind us of "a few failed candidates": Zoroaster, Mani, and Bahá'u'lláh of Baha'i, for example (p. 6). To those might be added the 19th century's father of the term "sociology" and founder of the Religion of Humanity, Auguste Comte (Pickering, 2006, 2009a, 2009b; Wernick, 2005). It remains to be seen if the focal person of the 2009 American Sociology Association's Section on Altruism and Social Solidarity, Pitirim Sorokin, might eventually replace, for example, Buddha, Jesus, or Muhammad as a paradigmatic exemplar (Herrick, 2008; Jaspers, 1962; Jeffries, 2005; Pellegrino, 2007; Weinstein, 2010, pp. 48-53, 187-188).

But both Protestant Czech Comenius and Backward Caste Savitribai located Jesus as their fountain worldvoice, the initiator source of their counterculture ideas; and significant writings and the spiritual community associated with Jesus impacted them both. Jesus was the premier person they looked to as model, their person of virtue (Beale, 2008; Corduan, 2002; Deshpande, 2010; Mungekar, 2009).

Born in southern Moravia by the Olsawa River, Comenius' family belonged to the Czech reformist evangelical church. After graduating from Heidelberg University, Comenius became a bishop. He writes that from his teen years he was "inflamed with the love for learning . . . and not only for myself, but for the good of others also," convinced that education was for all, with the goal "that God be worshipped with all one's heart" (quoted in Lang, [1891] 2009, pp. 7, 13).

Savitribai called Jesus "Baliraja" (bali = sacrifice; raja = king), asserting that "His great teaching is: 'You must love your enemy and do him a good turn'" (Phule, 2002, p. 236). According to the way Savitribai saw history, Jesus was the "one, great champion of the downtrodden, the holiest of the holy, the great sage and lover of Truth, Baliraja" (Phule, 2002, p. 73, originally written in 1873). According to Phule, when that

system. There, learning was only for forward caste persons, specifically for Brahmin caste males. But Baliraja radically reached to teach and share all learning with all persons: backward caste, those without caste, and even—if it could be conceived—for females.

In Baliraja, Savitribai found a luminary with a liberating voice, a person of virtue unimaginable. Thus Comenius' and Savitribai's systems of thought and their resultant educational venues flowed from their worldvoice, from Jesus as their prototype person, a luminary person they profoundly adored. To them, He was a fountainhead who reimaged life, altered their thinking, and assigned them new life tasks. He was their worldvoice.

Worldview

A worldview is the

Interestingly, Sire (2009), after forty years of wrestling with worldviews, shifted from worldview as primarily a "set of presuppositions." Sire's expanded vision sees worldview as a "commitment, a fundamental orientation of the heart." Thus he adds the notion of story for formation and expression, and acknowledges "the role of behavior in assessing what anyone's worldview actually is" (Sire, 2009, p. 10). And my point is that a careful look at worldviews will clarify that each mindset lens and worldview story looks back to a moral luminary. Each of the major worldview systems owes its roots to a moral exemplar whose story still feeds the worldview (Dilworth, 1989; Graham, 1997; Mitchell, 2008; Sire, 2009; Stark, 2008; Wilkens & Sanford, 2009).

Both Savitribai and Comenius, in their own contexts, presented a coherent set of educational ideas that were radically different from the prevailing educational approaches of their respective societies. For example, Comenius' approach was diametrically opposite to the European priestly position crystallized by papal priests (Begley & Koterski, 2005; Cubberley, 1920; Fulop-Miller, 1942, pp. 427-433); likewise, Savitribai's educational approach was in stark contrast to the Indian priestly system imposed by pundit Brahmins (Mukhopadhyay, 2004; Rakhe, 1992; and see Sanneh, 2009).

In the Europe of Comenius, the powerful clergy were "immoral and indolent"; the monastic orders and upper clerical levels held wealthy properties, claimed exclusive privileges, pressed oppressive exactions on the poor, and demanded "pay for sacred services" otherwise "inaccessible" (Stark, 2003, pp. 68-73; Hillerbrand, 2009). Overall, education was a guarded preserve for rich, privileged males. Peasant families were expected to stay in their station of life, and any family caught educating a son without landlord permission was heavily fined.

Jotirao Phule, Savitribai's husband, saw India's cultural system as a comprehensive and crushing way of life. To him, it was a Brahmin-generated "rule of fear," a way of life manufactured and maintained by what he called "their selfish texts like the Manusamhita . . . along with the magic of the Vedic mantras" (Phule, [1883] 2002, p. 128). Phule said it

Catholic priest system of Comenius' Europe neglected the education of the peasant classes. Worse, the karma Brahmin priest system of Savitribai's India forbade the education of the polluted castes. Nevertheless, their ideas bear striking similarities, despite their vastly different cultural contexts, and their educational proposals retain

different life estates have formed ancient and present territorial zones of contest, zones of unequal fullness of life (Harrison, 2006; Kuran, 2010; Omvedt, 2008; Pryce-Jones, 2009; Stearns, 2001; Weber, 1993; Wolf, 2012).

For my purposes here, I simply note that Comenius and Savitribai converged on the same person-of-excellence: Jesus, or Baliraja (Atwood, 2009; Deshpande, 2002, pp. 9-12; Deshpande, 2010, pp. 50-57; Michaud, 2004; Omvedt, 2008, pp. 164-169; Spinka, 1942; Sztompka, 1993; Wolf, 2007b, pp. 4-10). Then, from that prototype voice (worldvoice), they designed an uncommon way to think about the education of children (worldview) and set out to construct a whole different world of social possibilities (worldvenue) (Deshpande, 2010; Lockerbie, 1994; Stroope, 2005). They resolutely set out to weave a different educational reality for the children around them, and for the emerging generations.

Both Comenius and Savitribai, in their own settings, sought to alter not only the existing child education practices, but also the very pedagogical preceptor and presuppositions, the worldvoice and worldview, on which those practices rested. For Comenius and Savitribai were content with nothing less than the creation of a paradigm shift that would reset an entire continent's—and eventually the globe's—concept of education (Deshpande, 2002, pp. 5-10, 18-21; Lang, 2009; Stroope, 2005, pp. 3-6).

Dominant views of opposition were entrenched against them, sitting in thrones of power. Comenius' and Savitribai's own minority positions

Their core practical corollary was that every child is equal and unique, deserving and demanding nurture to flourish in the will of God—each child and every child (Dobinson, 1970).

According to their culturally most uncommon thinking, if each child is equal and unique, then each child should be nurtured, and education for children should be universal, yet child-specific. Each child is special, not for continued "endarkenment," but for cultivated enlightenment. No child should ever be denigrated. Instead, each child should be elevated.

From their radicalized perspective, Comenius and Savitribai both designed an exemplary education program. Starting from the same core metaphor, both developed a similar framework of education that sought to revolutionize their societies, marked by four key features. The Comenius|Savitribai framework of education (1) conceives the scope of education as universally available, (2) introduces a teaching style that is child sensitive, (3) insists on a learning experience that is intellectually critical, and (4) leads to an education system that is socially reforming (Andrade & Wolf, 2008; Bušek, 1972; Sadler, 1966; Ulich, 1950, 1999).

Conclusion

In the long run, Comenius succeeded (Alexander, 2001; Lawton & Gordon, 2003). Savitribai, on the other hand, has not yet succeeded within India. She has, however, succeeded beyond India (Kamble, 2007; Patel, 2009; Jamanadas, 2002). That is, there are those who contend that it is largely because India has failed to heed Savitribai and the thinking she represents, that India still faces her major problems of education to this day (Banerjee-Dube, 2010; Stern, 2003; Virdi, 2011). For example, in 1957 India's leading sociologist, M. N. Srinivas, said, "In the last century or more, caste has become much more powerful in certain respects, than it ever was in pre-British days" (Srinivas, 1957, quoted in Guha, 2007, p. 605; see also Pandian, 2007; Perappadan, 2007).

In 2007, historian Ramachandra Guha, of Yale University, would write that "the subsequent decades were to provide resounding confirmation of M. N. Srinivas' thesis. Far from disappearing with democracy and modernization, caste continued to have a determining influence in (and on) Indian society" (Guha, 2007, p. 606).

"True," Guha notes, "the caste system was by no means unaffected by the economic and social change unleashed by Independence," but still, whether "in town or village, at leisure or at work," Indians continue to be "defined" by the caste "into which they were born" (Guha, 2007, p. 606; see also Chakravarti, 2006; Rothermund, 2008). The result in

education is that religious, cultural, and gender prejudices are "strong, keeping girls out of schools" so that "gender disparities in secondary education are the largest in the world" (Tilak, 2002), and "learning levels are in fact declining, especially in the Hindi-speaking states" (Brinkmann, 2012, p. 44).

That said, it must at least be conceded that in every educated woman of India, Savitribai has truly succeeded. For today, every educated woman of India, anywhere in the world, stands as testimony to the power of the four original and unusual ideas shared by Comenius and Savitribai: that education for every child, without exception, must be universally available, child sensitive, intellectually critical, and socially reforming.

And every girl child, in any school, on any day, in India—sitting alongside boys, reading a book, exploring the Internet, learning new things—is creating a new kind of India. It is a Savitribai-kind of India, where centuries-long deference is haltingly giving way to a barely-century-long, Savitribai-led defiance. It is a defiance that is struggling to break clear from a 3000-year past of mandatory non-education (Deshpande, 2010; Jamanadas, 2008).

A "canary in a coal mine" is a warning of danger or trouble yet to come. Early coal mines did not have ventilation systems, so miners too often died from the buildup of methane and carbon monoxide gases in the mines. A "canary in a coal mine" was a solution. Mine workers would carry a canary down into the tunnels with them. More sensitive to poisonous gases than humans, the canary's death signaled the coming future for the humans. So everyone listened for the song and kept their eye on the sensitive little canary, the signal of their future.

Perhaps then, little girls being educated in India are little reverse-canaries in the coal mine. It may be that the presence or the lack of little girls' presence in the Indian classroom will yet prove to be India's early

Comenius and Savitribai pointed the way out of the poisonous pedagogical hole (Ghosh, 2009; Gupta, 2008). Their solution was radical then; it remains radical today (Anand, 2011). Plainly spoken, only a revolution in worldvoice, worldview, and worldvenue will bring a resolution to India's educational quandary (Kumar, 2008).

Like a breeze of fresh air, what French sociologist Andrè Béteille has said of their parents, can be said of backward caste and outcaste children: they may be "still exploited, oppressed and stigmatized; but their

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