



Title: 9 December 1988 Personal Correspondence on Education, Media, etc.

Author(s): Dr. Shigeru Kounosu

Published by: Worldwide Indigenous Science Network

Publish date: 31 August 2013

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Dec. 9, '88.

Dear Louella

This meeting was a bit scattered. Maybe we are trying to figure out nature of our group. Judgment as to what to do is a tricky business. I would not rush, but on the other hand people may not wait for emergence of some integrating sense in the group. I do not know how to assess that. But as usual, I write up what come to my mind.

I guess we were discussing how better to do the communication needed between the Developed and the Developing countries/peoples, Emergency situations are exceptional (hopefully). When poverty, deprivation, malnutrition are not "News Worthy", how do we get people in well-to-do countries to know? Or Perhaps, you had International Development Education in your mind. It appears that other than occasional bursts we do not know much and care less.

Of course, the people in our group are exceptional. Our group was almost like Who's Who of International Development. I am an outsider to that. I have never done anything worth talking about for International Development. But outsiders have one natural advantage. I know something about the reason why ordinary people do not know and cannot afford to care. And the "outsider" point of view also helps in looking at the World View (Common Sense, Prejudice) of a Culture that Education and Media create, maintain and enforce.

I mentioned "Education" along with media. Because "education" is a propaganda, brainwashing. And Media do educate, at least in the sense they select and define what is expected to be known for the majority of people, and thereby they guide and influence the Accepted Perception of the World, if not manufacture the operational "Reality". Media confer Value Status for a certain knowledge and deny to others, Just as schools and universities do. You note that "News" do have "Commodity Value". Knowing comes with Value sensation. There is no such thing as "Value Free Knowledge", including that in Science. Intellectual Snobism is just a minor case among; others, but it sticks out because it is a "Caricature" of what we always do.

When I came to the U.S., I used to pick up New York Times from waste baskets at street corners to see what Media(um) is saying. It had very obvious bias/prejudice/ideological slant, both implicit and explicit. American intellectuals apparently did not see that, I was very much

puzzled by the curious phenomenon that so intelligent people can so easily be misled by so obvious propaganda. As I told you before, I used to go to meetings of "Foreign Policy Forum" etc. There I find myself completely off base from everybody, say on issues of Korea, Quimoi-Matsu Island, Vietnam, Rearmament of Japan, etc. What Americans had as the Reality was completely different from the common sense view of Asia and Asians that ordinary Japanese held. I was lucky not being called "Pinko" and thrown out of the group.

By a chance, I met the head of Peace Corps and asked what the U.S. was doing to help education of brick layers, carpenters, bicycle repairmen in India besides educating Ph.D. engineers, top managers, elite bureaucrats. He was very much surprised by my question, which was just a natural question that anybody from poor countries would ask. His answer was, more or less, that Leaders of Nation were most important and implied that poor people did not matter much. Later, I found out that the head of Peace Corps was a brother-in-law to the President Kennedy and very intelligent man, besides being a "liberal".

When I entered Canada some 20 years ago, I used to see glaring bias, prejudice, ideological slant in Globe and Mail, just as I saw them in New York Times. To be honest, I used to see "glaring bias" even in the Herald under Cleo and Doug just as well. I also found out that Canadians in general did not know who Herbert E. Norman was. He was very famous in Japan as a great Canadian Historian, Diplomat, because his books were the standard texts in graduate schools in History. In Canada, the only guy whom I could find and talk about Norman was Chester Ronning. Ronning was delighted to talk about him --- in fact he got quite drunk and we were laughing till 4 o'clock in morning ---. Perhaps, McCarthy Committee in the U.S. did not like him was enough reason for Canadians to forget him.

Later, an American scholar by a name of Dower published a book on Norman and in the introduction to the book he accused of the ideological bias of scholars. I happened to be acquainted with the Big Name scholar mentioned in the book at Princeton, and knew how the bias worked, As far as I know, response of Canadian academic was minimal. It appears that Canadian academics did not wish to stand up against the American "authority" on the subject.

Interestingly, now that I think of it, I do not see "misinformation" as clearly as I saw years before. I guess I am "culturally assimilated" to "know" things like the top 10% of Canadians. I mean not that I know as much as the elites know, but in the selection of "what counts as knowing" and at the limit by which I stop asking questions. Nonetheless, to my ears and eyes, CBC, Globe and Mail, etc.

are still biased media. I suppose that keep me outsider, in the sense I do not share the same Myth with the intellectual elites of this country. You can take as evidence that I am not quite "educated" enough in Canadian Culture.

Recently I have come to see that Noam Chomsky et al talking about the Ideological bias of American Intellectuals. When Chomsky was on air, CBC host Peter Gzowsky was very much upset and could not refrain from interrupting so much that he ruined the interview. Gzowsky later recognized how unprofessional that was and did the second interview. But that tells me how deep and emotional a certain "prejudice" is. Just as Japanese and German intellectuals did not "see" nor "hear" what were going on around them during W.W.II., American Intellectuals did not see what the U.S. was doing in the world then. Canadian intellectuals are not too far different (if my academic colleagues are a fair sample of them).

I am sympathetic to laborers who come home totally exhausted and have no mind to think or even "feel" anything. "Entertained" by media may be the best that they can. If they are ignorant, I do not blame them. They are kept ignorant and deceived. In alienated works, they may become numb and cannot think of anything "deep".

But I think it inexcusable that Intellectuals being "blind" to the deceptions that are going around, if they did not create the deceptions for themselves. As much as they contemptuously talk of the incapacity or apathy of lower class people to engage in anything requiring "heavy" discourse, I would expect intellectuals to be more capable. Yet, the intellectuals don't do "home works" either. "Heavy Thinking" is avoided just the same. They are just as ignorant, unfeeling, apathetic, powerless, gutless, incapable of thinking, 615 the ones whom they look down with contempt. If Chomsky was right, the "liberal intellectuals" are the ones who perpetuating the deception. I do not exempt what so called "scientists" and "Educators" from this.

For example, it is only recently that people have come to pay some attentions to "unfortunate unemployed" and Natives issues. International Development Aid is important. Protests against Apartheid have to be kept up. Concerns about Human Right issues in other countries must be voiced. But I feel funny about the phenomenon that somehow the problems internal to our own country are avoided. Is it because the internal problems negate our "righteous superiority" and make us feel "inferior" or "guilty"? Is it because they demand "heavier" thinking than the problems at far away places? Or the "heavy thinking" not only too much for their mental capacity, but also threatening to the

System of injustice that is good to their privileged economic and social positions?

If so, we may be using "poor starving people in Ethiopia" to make us feel superior in the name of "humanitarian aid". I grant that it is better than nothing. But there remains the question of the hypocrisy of charity. We create and maintain the very system that victimize them and then turn around to say we are so good people that we help them. The degree of deception by our Media is far less than that by our own self-deception. If our Media are sensationalistic and superficial, it is perhaps because we are sensationalistic and superficial.

In my graduate school days, I used to live in a Quaker Weekend Project House in the middle of Philadelphia slum. I was invited as a foreign student to the discussion sessions that the weekend volunteers were having. There, I learned quite a lot. A Black Lady, a welfare mother, who lived in the house in front of ours, came to know me well enough to tell me that "Your people come here for weekend and need not stay. We have no hope getting out here". That made me thinking for a long time.

The lady knew I was from Japan and some of her "boy friends" were GIs who defeated Japan only some 10 years before. I was an enemy to them. They must have sensed the irony that I got paid to be a Ph.D. physicist in one of most expensive universities --- I was told that my "education" cost the U.S. tax payers several million dollars ---, while they had to suffer humiliating poverty without any hope of ever getting out of it.

The location was reputedly a "dangerous" place in the city. Drunkenness, Violence, etc. were just ordinary scene there. But our daughter was born there, and we have never felt any danger. They used to give our daughter a Nickel, which they could not afford do to their own kids too often. The guys and women who loved our daughter were drunk and fighting or prostituting in the alley behind our house the night before. But they were essentially graceful people (unlike some academics that I came to know later). That made me question who is keeping them poor and makes them violent.

One time, they organized a protest march against city administration. It was like a festival. I saw beautiful shine in their faces. The Drunkards and prostitutes whom I knew walked in dignity and grace. I do not question if the March was "effective". Even if it was an ephemeral flare like that of the girl who sold matches in Anderson's story, I think the moment of human dignity is worth having.

Such was an image internal to the most developed and wealthiest nation in the world then, seen by eyes of a guy from a recipient country of its international aid. Needless to say the image was quite different from what I used to see in Hollywood movies. (I was a Marilyn Monroe fan).

I do think Canada is a beautiful country. Canadians, in general, are well off indeed. They are lucky enough to be generous. But then, I also see internal problems. Not that I could do anything much to help, but wonder if "Internal CIDA" may not be a bad idea. But then, the "Internal Development Project" requires "heavy discourse". How to do that is another question. If even the intelligent People with good hearts in our group feel it "too much", then there is not much chance. I wonder about this. You are an excellent organizer and probably know how and when to do things. Any idea?

You were talking about inviting some students from the Third World countries to our meetings. That is a splendid idea. I would very much like to try that'. And perhaps, when an opportunity arises, we invite Native Americans and listen to what they have to say. However, judgment as to when is somewhat tricky. I am reading books like one by Edward Said [Orientalism], who is an Egyptian Arab, and find the problem of "Different Cultures" very difficult. To an extent, one has to prepare to face a bewildering world, say, like that from reading the World of Algerians through Camus. Viewed from North American "Etiquette", that is not a suitable topic for a dinner conversation. I do not know how to do it without becoming "Anti-Social". To get to know people "ought" to be pleasurable and be fun to do. Humans have natural sensuality to enjoy knowing others and have a sense of belonging/relating. But I am very clumsy at the sort of things. You are always smooth and graceful, tell me the secret!

Yours

Sam K.

P.S. According French "Journalism", criticisms of "Post-Modernism" is in fashion now. They are talking of the Paris Revolt of May 1968, saying that it was essentially a "Declaration" of Narcissistic Individualism. This has to do with our discussion in two ways.

One is related to our question of how to facilitate a meeting of minds, which immediately turns to a question of how to deal with problems of Ego/Narcissism. International Developing Group is "altruistically" inclined. But that does not mean we are free from problems of Ego. It comes out, for example, as our senses of "Having Good Time" (Bonheur) and "Having Pleasure" (Jouissance). In English, they are the same. In French, apparently they mean different, at a superficial level, one referring to "Collective" and another to "individual". Beyond that there seems another type of distinction which brings awareness of, Narcissism (both Individual or Collective) and the Grace that transcend Individual limitations.

The French "journalism" is in a hot Pursuit of the "Post-Modern Life Style" that is, on one hand, moving towards increasing isolation of people, and on another, moving towards increasing media controlled "homogeneity". Each "individual" is confined to one's small universe and hardly afford to live beyond defending one's immediate private pleasure. But the "pleasure" is defined, controlled, and rationed out by a huge Homogenizing Machine called Media (Consumer Market is a Part of Media). McLuhan was right. Medium is the Meaning.

The Socialist Power in French Government did not do nothing much about that, and the May 1968 Revolt is now looked back in that light. Interestingly they appear to be oblivious to the fact that among 1789 Revolutionary slogans of "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity", the third one had drop out soon after the Revolution. Now they are saying Equality will soon be forgotten. There are a lot of talks on Human Right, but not much on Equality.

Of course, we know Equality at Euro-American Consumer Society style, extended to people in the Third World would not be feasible. The Mother Earth cannot provide for the Affluent Waste worldwide at the level of Euro-American Consumer Society. Even if we manage to produce Goods, we have no place to put our Garbage. Instead of "Material Goods", we have to invent "Mental Goods" pretty quick, if we are to share in Equality. But that brings us back to the problem of "Fraternity". That has to do with "Power" rather than "Right". You note that Natives are not asking for "Right", but for "Power". Unfortunately French Journalists do not know this yet.

Secondly, it has to do with our discussion of "Media". European Journalism is a part of "Media", but it is very "Heavy". They used to publish "Articles" in addition to "News". Marx was a journalist, Sartre, Marcuse, Foucault, et al regularly wrote for newspapers. But then they are the "News" in the sense of "A man bit a dog". We do not have it in North America. European Newspapers, having concentration of population within their reach and compete.

North American newspapers in general have to be content with a Local Monopoly for each, even if the "chains" operated by individual owners are nation wide or even multinational. Even, our monthly journals are mostly for "light reading for entertainment", though some are aiming at Intellectual market but "light entertainment" nonetheless. The articles in North American journals have to be written in a "polished" art so as not to alarm readers into "heavy thinking", just as the Visual Media have to present "Effective Images" to the Consumers. They are Consumer Arts, in which elimination of thinking counts as "efficiency", or "effectiveness".

From a point of view of North American "Popular Culture", European Journalism is "Super-Snobbishly Intellectual". It is no better than the elitism of Canadian "top 10%" in one sense. If it is done in North America, it probably offends people, say by "threatening" self-confident narcissistic intellectuals into "insecurity" of facing the problems that they have been ignorant about. We do not wish to be reminded that we have more "learning" to do. The question comes to that of "Whose pleasure it is marketed?". Is it only for those who have become tired of usual intellectual games? Or can it be another Mad Magazine whose selling point is pure unadulterated offensiveness?

This brings me back to the question of "Bonheur", I like Happiness and dislike anything that makes people unhappy, however good the cause is, I respect the right of people for Pleasures, whatever forms they take. Individuality is important, for without that there is no human dignity. But people do feel that something is missing. In a different context, I read Leonard Cohen's Beautiful Loser, a story of "affair" by a Modern Intellectual to a woman of Lost Native Tribe. (I mean "by", "to", not between.) That was also from the time of "1968 Revolution", though the book was published two years earlier. The story ended in a despair and self-defeat. But that such a book was a best-seller suggests that people were looking for something.

Perhaps, there is a great happiness and pleasure when we transcend individual limitations. It seems that our Sensual need contains something beyond that for narcissistic,

individualistic pleasure. But here is my problem. I do not know how to be "Sociable" even with the closest friends in Peace Research.