

Education for the New World

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The difficulties that we perceive today in student life are very much a function of worldview. Each age educates its young to fit the worldview of that age. Our age is not different in that sense. The difficulty is the worldview that we share or fail to share. When we talk about education or the difficulties in student life, we're dealing first of all with young human beings. We're dealing with why we educate, who we're educating, and for what purpose. The answer to all of those questions involves larger parameters -- what are our assumptions about reality, meaning, value, life? Once we can answer those larger assumptions we can look more clearly at what is happening in education and why there are things not happening in education.

Mechanism

We can assume, as has been assumed in some ages, that human beings are part of a mechanical universe, to be educated in a mechanical way. Everything operates like a machine. Given that assumption, we're concerned about filling up the container, getting the machine to work efficiently. Our assumption in that kind of age will be to produce human beings who contain a great deal of information. The fruit of that in the 19th century was the Industrial Revolution which turned out schools with an educational system where young people were fed many facts and had a difficult time digesting those facts.

Perhaps the most classic satire of education of this sort and of this worldview was written by Charles Dickens in the 19th century in his novel *Hard Times*. I'd like to give a small part of the chapter called "Murdering the Innocents." It begins with the schoolteacher Thomas Gradgrind.

Thomas Gradgrind, sir... I man of facts and calculations. A man who proceeds upon the principle that two and two are four, and nothing over, and who is not to be talked into allowing for anything over. Thomas Gradgrind, sir. With a role and a pair of scales, and the multiplication table always in his pocket, ready to weigh and measure any parcel of human nature, and tell you exactly what it comes to. It is a mere question of figures, a case of simple arithmetic. You might hope to get some other nonsensical belief into the head of George Gradgrind, or Augustus Gradgrind, or John Gradgrind, or Joseph Gradgrind, but into the head of Thomas Gradgrind, no, sir!

Indeed he seemed a kind of cannon loaded to the muzzle with facts, and prepared to blow them clean out of the regions of childhood at one discharge. He seemed a galvanizing apparatus, charged with a grim mechanical substitute for the tender young imaginations that were to be stoned away.

From the 19th century classroom of Charles Dickens to the University of California at Berkeley in 1964 where people walked around with IBM cards saying do not fold, spindle or mutilate me, it's the same situation, the same worldview that was being questioned, that was being challenged. All insights, all ideologies, all revelations ought to be questioned with mind, with heart.

The principles of Reverend Moon are to be applied in exactly the same way as every other ideology. The test is always one of reason and of heart, of what is constructive, instructive and comprehensive. Everything is to be questioned with the standard of excellence.

This worldview of the 19th and 20th centuries was one in which many young people saw the shortcomings of a materialist society, the shortcomings of a mechanistic and efficient society. Essentially there was something missing. People began to see *all* the shortcomings. Poets like Allen Ginsberg, songwriters like Bob Dylan -- singing in every town from Eugene, Oregon, to Boulder, Colorado, to Brooklyn, New York -- were singing the same message, questioning, and seeing the shortcomings of the society. They were asking from a new point of view.

Imagine the scene for the last 20 years -- little coffee shops in Greenwich Village, little soup houses in Eugene, Oregon, little ice cream shops in Denver, Colorado. Poets like Allan Ginsberg writing lines like these lines from "Howl," perhaps one of the most famous poems of the past 25 years. Imagine your feeling as a young person being affected by this society:

I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness, starving, hysterical, naked, dragging themselves through the streets of dawn looking for an angry fix.

That was the critical vision of the 1950's and 1960's. That's the vision of someone crying out in anger at all the injustices that we know so well. It was an anger turned into destruction of hundreds of millions of dollars of school property; the rage that young people feel -- that something is wrong and we don't know what it is -- filtered down even into the elementary schools. The cry that was being uttered by people like Bob Dylan and Allen Ginsberg was a cry that was picked up by many people. Whatever you think of the validity of the cry, it was embraced as a worldview by many young people.

The New Romanticism

Now in the 70's, there is a recognition that we also have to read to the mechanistic worldview. The end of the 60's brought in a new romanticism, especially among college students, among young people, among educated and intellectual people. Everyone wanted to be spontaneous, everyone wanted to be natural. A philosophy, a worldview was needed to justify this way of life. So we had educators like A.S. Neill whose book *Summerhill* about the famous school in England is perhaps the most widely read book on education in the United States. What is the worldview of someone like him? Let me read you a brief quote: "When the child's individual interests and social interests clash, the individual interests should be allowed precedence. Allow the child to live out his natural instincts. I believe that to impose any kind of authority is wrong. The child should not do anything until he comes to the opinion, his own opinion, that it should be done. The curse of humanity is the external compulsion. Finally, self-regulation means the right of a baby to live freely, without outside authority. There is never a problem child; there are only problem parents. Perhaps it would be better to say there is only a problem of humanity."

This is the new freedom, this is the new license, this is the point of view that emphasizes the new romanticism. Everything is natural if we just leave it alone, and everybody wants to be left alone. Unfortunately, the new romanticism doesn't work. It's an ideology that's truly a mythology, for it has many shortcomings.

The Split

In education, the world operates in terms of basic ideology. Essentially the world now is being moved by two very powerful ideologies -- the Communist Marxist-Leninist ideology and the democratic ideology. Each makes assumptions about human behavior. (Every ideology makes assumptions about human behavior.) The great criticism of young people in the United States has been that the ideology of democracy and American culture is essentially an ideology in which each person is thought to be separate. Everybody is equal and supreme, everybody is essentially on his own, the self-made man, the Horatio Alger moving from rags to riches. The emphasis is on cultivating oneself -- education for me, for what I want or what I want to cultivate. The result of this L, either the ambitious, self-seeking individual who is motivated by success and who feels the will to power, or the individual who rejects the idea of success, rejects the idea of being stimulated and motivated and feels overpowered.

So we have a culture well described in sociological literature of individuals who overpower others and those who feel helpless, insecure, and overpowered. This is the kind of split that we feel in our culture. People are either taught to be overly aggressive if they're going to succeed or they are beaten into a kind of passivity. If you have an ideology that says achieve as much as you can, be aggressive as much as you can, dominate as much as you can, the only thing to check that or to brake that is an ideology which is essentially one of compassion, mercy, love. It is religion or principles, ideals, a spiritual ideology that has tempered the democratic way of life.

Now Marxism also posits an ideology and it's a very real force in the world. It is an atheistic ideology, a materialistic ideology; it emphasizes that material reality is the only reality. Human beings are essentially material stuff. We train that stuff as we train animals. That's why we see the popularization of behavioristic psychology, Pavlovian psychology in the Soviet Union. There's very little emphasis on the psychology of personality. If the human being does not fit into the preconception, then it's very easy to eliminate that human being. You're just eliminating a part of matter, something that can easily be replaced. There is very little sense of the preciousness of human life. The implications of the Marxist ideology have many spin-offs in terms of how it affects human life.

The Unification Principle also posits an ideology; it has a point of view. It makes certain assumptions about reality, which are to be questioned, tested, felt.

Essential Reality

It believes, in the first place, that the essential reality is not just energy, but there's a lawful dimension to that energy, and a loving dimension. Traditionally, the word which we use to describe this reality is God. Mathematicians perceive it as law, poets have seen it as beauty, and Martin Buber has seen it as love. Essentially though, this is the fundamental reality with which we begin. Once you posit that as the essential reality of life it makes for a whole new ballgame. You can have a different point of view. Conversion is not necessarily an irrational, nonsensical experience. Einstein had a conversion experience. Galileo and Copernicus had conversion experiences. It just depends on the dimensions of that conversion experience. Have you been converted to something narrow or something larger, something which is constructive and instructive, or something which diminishes you?

If God is a reality, what is the relationship of God to the world? To the Hebrew people and the Christian people, it is the covenant relationship. There's only one God, there's only one world, there's only one humanity. God created human beings, He created a world and there is relationship. God is not a machine or someone who created an object and then stands back. The fundamental assumption of the Unification Principle in terms of education is that this relationship has meaning, that the world reflects God, that everything is created in the image of God. We are not gods but we have the same qualities as God, in potential, for everything has to go through stages of growth.

If we are created in relationship to God, if we reflect His nature, what are we reflecting? We have the potential, it says in the Bible, to be fruitful, to multiply and to have dominion over things.

What is God's nature? His is a nature of law and of love which we call a universal dimension. God doesn't just love a people, God loves all people. Physical laws, genetics don't apply to some people; they apply to all people. The rose is beautiful in Brooklyn, in Cincinnati and in Berkeley. You may not like roses, but there is a quality of beauty in all things, a universal quality. You have a mind that seeks truth. You have a heart that wants to love. That's our nature. That's the stuff of which we are made. Where does it come from -- paramecium, amoebae? It comes from God. Emotionally we constantly seek beauty. With our mind we seek constantly to know the truth. With our heart we seek constantly to find love.



The Goal of Education

The first goal of education, in the most fundamental sense, in the largest view, is somehow to enter into a relationship with God, with other people, and with the world. What's the classic commandment in every religion? To love God with all your heart, all your soul, all your might and to love your neighbor as yourself. The truth never changes.

God creates to enter into a relationship which stimulates Him. If God enters into a relationship with people and with the world, and if the people and the world reflect His nature, then God can be stimulated by beauty infinitely. Every lovely thing we do stimulates God. Every loving thought stimulates God, just as it stimulates me. I can speak words to you and they may stimulate you one way or another. I can look at you and you can be moved. You can look at me and I can be moved. What's happening? It's on a level

of love. God seeks stimulation, He seeks joy. What do we seek from each other? We seek joy. What do we want from God? We want joy, we want to experience His fullness, His love, His energy. What do we seek from the world, beauty, flowers, music, song, colors, lights. Hopkins said the world is charged with the grandeur of God. He was able to open up his senses and perceive how each thing was filled with the beauty and the energy and the love of God.

How do we grow our lawful nature, our loving nature? We don't begin life mature. We have to grow physically and spiritually to maturity. The ideal of the Unification educational principle is not merely to grow in technique, to gain information, but ultimately to embody God's heart. God is essentially a God of heart and all things are connected not so much through energy, but through heart. So we try to grow that universal heart. If you want to have a conversion experience, just meditate upon God's heart for hours and see what happens. It opens up whole new possibilities.

When I worked in Lewisburg Penitentiary, we used to have the prisoners role-play the wardens and the guards. It was an astounding experience, a totally new awareness, when the prisoner started to play a warden. Someday when you have time, leisure and desire, role-play God for an hour, a day, or a year and see what happens. It's a whole different reality. Why the power of the Unification Church, why the power of the training seminars? A reporter comes and sees what to him are plastic smiles. How are you going to communicate with somebody experiencing God's heart? That even if you're not feeling good, perhaps someone has the need for your smile, your care. It's a tremendous effort that takes heart, intelligence, and sensibility, to respond to that person. But how are you going to communicate that unless someone goes through the narrow gate, goes through the fire.

Growing

In any case, the basic principle is to grow one's heart, to grow one's lawful sensibility, to embody God's ideal, to understand from God's point of view, to feel from God's point of view, which for the Unification Principle is the true human point of view.

Everybody is meant to grow into God's point of view. All parents are made to be true parents, to represent God, to guide, uplift, enlarge and elevate others to understand from a larger point of view. Everyone is meant to have God's heart. Everyone is meant to care for the human family, not just a particular family. We all love the particular thing that we have skin touch with but very rarely do we love the larger kin. Everybody is taught to love his mother and father; very few people are taught to love the people across the street. We want to stretch our sensibilities.

God seeks human beings so He can be stimulated; human beings seek God so they can feel stimulation. But this requires an obligation, a duty. To be a human being, you have to establish relationship, you have to extend yourself. That's the covenant relationship. Abraham, Moses, Jesus are all individuals who tried in their own way to embody God's standard. In this age, also, we have to seek people who can see things from the largest point of view and act with the heart that feels things from the largest point of view.

The individual is the most precious being, for every individual has within him God's value. You can't disrespect people, you can't abuse people, because every human being is a divine being, a child of God. The purpose of education is to make children of God, true children who inherit God's ideal and who can inherit the earth. To have dominion over things, to be fruitful is to perfect one's own character. To multiply you have to enter into relationship.

The difficulty is that we don't know how to relate to each other. Teachers are acting like they are students, students are acting like their teachers, children are acting like their parents, parents are acting like their children. Without law in relationship there is no basis for value. To multiply means to multiply upon a mature foundation; upon a foundation of ethics you can establish a good family, good society, good nation, and a good world.

The cruel irony of our lives is that we are given each other to have, to hold and to love. But we can't even look at each other. We abuse the earth. We are just now learning that there are ecological principles to guarantee our value in relationship to the earth. There are moral and ethical principles that guide our relationships to each other and there are basic religious ideals that guide our relationship to God. If we are blind to those principles, if our worldview is narrow, if we are merely reacting to a worldview, then we fail to establish the true value.

Joy is the basis and a result of relationship. Everything, however, must go through a period of growth. Why the seminars, why the process of training? It's always to grow our hearts and our minds so they can embody God's nature. The classic way of life for Christians, for Jews, for Mohammedans, has always been imitation of God. Unless we can imitate God in our everyday actions, we fail to fulfill His demands. We don't just grow to perfection in one day. We're perhaps the most realistic people in the world. Who else could possibly work through the dirt and the grit and the mud of an imperfect situation and have the hope of moving towards something ideal.

Mature Love

To become a mature human being, we have to perfect our love. Unfortunately, love is the most powerful force in life, and love is the thing that has been the most cheapened in our culture. The ideal of Unification Principle is to guide young people to mature love based on universal standards, to learn how to embody God's standard of love. Human beings grow physically automatically, but morally and spiritually we have to train our will, train our heart, train our desire, according to lawful principles. It's a very difficult job. The hardest thing in the world is to make one trusting and loving human being who has God's sensibility. But that is the task that we have chosen. People say we're optimists, that we're following a blind illusion, but you can test out what is the most constructive ideal, given that we need to work for the world of the future, not just the world of today. This is an ideal that will work.

The foundation of multiplication is to build a God-centered family. All virtue, all ethics, are learned within the family. A child observes his parents and learns the meaning of fidelity, filial piety, loyalty. Unless the child observes and learns a high standard of value, and multiplies upon that high standard, there is breakdown in the larger society and world.

Abraham was by himself. He had a vision of a monotheistic God. His father was an idol-maker but Abraham realized he had to have a higher vision for the age. It must have been very difficult for him to try to talk to other people. His father must have said, "Abraham, get back in the house and make those idols!" His father must have been very hurt to see Abraham go off and follow this crazy quest for an ethical, monotheistic God. But yet there was value to that quest, even though in the short run I'm sure Abraham did not want to hurt his father and loved his father dearly.

John the Baptist was in the wilderness alone. Now many young people are being pioneers. They don't have to do what John the Baptist did. They don't have to eat locusts and honey, but there's always a need for a pioneer, for someone to lay a foundation. If an age is a sinful, corrupt age, someone has got to bring it back to life. Somebody has to make some initial efforts, so somebody else can build upon that. Then we still need to build a world.

Our Responsibility

The standard of life is a standard of excellence -- fullness of intelligence, fullness of heart, fullness of sensibility. Every person involved in the Unification movement has that ideal. Messiah means anointed one, someone who is blessed by God, someone who has a full relationship with God. Reverend Moon says that everyone ultimately has to be an anointed son or daughter to God, to be in a messianic position to families, communities, nations, the world. Everyone has to have that role to give life to the world. No one can save us. We have to save ourselves. We have to live truthful lives, we have to live loving lives. Everybody has that responsibility. Once you have that conversion, once you have that awareness then you have something else that comes with it -- a sense of tremendous responsibility, to God, to the world, and to one's self.

What is the ultimate spirituality? Getting high on some charismatic figure? No, it's learning how to live the simple truths of life. Each moment, even when you're feeling negative, how to be constructive. Even when you want to be vicious, how to be loving. That's the nature of a spiritual way of life, not to chant "Up podium," and see how high you can get the podium. The question is always the quality of life, the quality of law, and the quality of love.

The purpose of education should be for each individual unique human being to embody a universal sensibility of truth, of beauty, of goodness and of love. Then each human being can contribute joy to God, joy to other people, joy to the world, and joy to himself. Every human being recognizes that the purpose of life is to experience joy. Everybody wants to be happy, but there's no way we can be happy unless we embody the law of life and love of life. Everybody has good intentions, everybody wants to be a good guy, but the only way we can be a good guy, the only way good guys don't finish last is if you have strength, if you have courage and if you have commitment to your ideals. Then there's hope that those ideals can be realized.