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Reclaiming Peace: From Domination to Spiritual Renewal

In this paper, I explore themes of Politics, Perception and Principles through the lens of Evaluative Self-Consciousness, using Gill and Thompson to examine the use of language of domination in speeches, and a personal account toward peace, and spiritual renewal. This peace intervention, is the first section of a six weekly sessions of a P.E.A.C.E. online course.

A civilization that proves incapable of solving the problems it creates is a decadent civilization. A civilization that chooses to close its eyes to its most crucial problems is a stricken civilization. A civilization that uses its principles for trickery and deceit is a dying civilization. (Césaire, A. 2000, p.29).

Introduction

Iran's burning. The bombing of School Children, along with parents and teachers, all gone in fiery ball of rage. Perhaps more than a hundred and sixty-five children, parents and teachers, in a double-tap strike, US and Israel commit a war crime at the start of another Illegal war.

I feel a sense of loss and rage of lives lost, ancient indigenous civilisations and knowledge is once again annihilated

How does this happen? How did I/we get here? Who's to Blame? How do we salvage collective wellbeing out of this travesty and find our way to peace.

P= Political Consciousness / Politics of Self - reflection

It's the early 90's in London, I attend Hillcroft, a women's college in Surrey (it no longer exists) and it's first time that I would be introduced to a course that focused on the concept of world history.

Yet, it has been only in these last few years that I began my own journey in earnest relearning peoples histories.

Knowing who we are, and how we find ourselves here begins with an understanding of our place in the world. To discover these truths we need an understanding of geopolitical economy. Radhika Desai (2013) in her book of the same title, suggests we need to recognise how geopolitical power and economic systems intersect in the global political landscape.

As a child of the 60's growing up in New York I remember the feminist call that the *personal is political*.

And as an African-Caribbean I am reminded of Jamaica's motto, 'Out of many, one people'

Following clues left by Bob Marley, about being trapped in a colonial mindset, and to free ourselves we had to free our minds. It's called Redemption Song.

*"Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery;
None but ourselves can free our minds.
Have no fear for atomic energy,
'Cause none of them can stop the time"*

It is for these reasons, my peace intervention course begins with self awareness of the world around me as I am acutely aware that I am but one out of many.

'We need to be aware of ourselves as one among many' . (Gill and Thompson (2021)).

Memories

Memories, what I remember, what I choose to remember and what I choose to leave behind

As I write, I reflect that I am conscious that this is the world as I see it.

"When humans give breath to life, give voice to their perception of life, this is a sacred act. They are taking an event that has already been committed and they are re-membling or reconstructing it in their minds.

Memory serves. In a society governed first and foremost by spirit to spirit relationships to all beings, memory serves much differently than in a society in which property possession determines importance. To re-member is, first, directional. Indigenous people commit to memory those events and the aspects of those events that suit the direction we are moving in or the direction we want to move in if a shift is occurring."

Maracle, Lee (2015:p.2) *Memory Serves*.

For Indigenous people, giving voice to memories and perceptions is a sacred act.

I am remembering. I'm seven or eight. It is an early memory of a spark. I'm in a play. I'm performing. I remember a few lines. As I look back at this moment,

I realise that I am certain. I had an awareness that I had intrinsic value. There was a spark, there was light. Thomson, Gill & Goodson (2021 p.33)

This early memory that I am remembering now in the present feels like *'the simple pleasure of being or as the joy that is being aware of one's awareness'* Thomson, Gill & Goodson (2021 p.122)

Still I'm unsure because as I look back through the years, is this the *simple pleasure* for me, myself as the intrinsic I? or am I appreciating myself as performer. Perhaps its both?

Although, I am consciously using these memories as proof of the knowledge of self-confidence, I had as a child;

I am also aware that as I grow and learn the ways of the world, and my role in it the light that was bright flickers in and out and through the years growing dim. dim. Dimmer.

P= Propaganda, the Narrative

Looking back at some point I become conscious that the dominant narrative is buried within everyday life at home and at school, in our school books, these ideas, thoughts and values shaped and influenced me.

John M. MacKenzie (1984:p.12) defines Propaganda *'as the transmission of ideas and values from one person, or groups of persons, to another, with the specific intention of influencing the recipients' attitudes in such a way that the interests of its authors will be enhanced'*. He explores how British Empire's ideals were subtly embedded in everyday life through schoolbooks, cinema, packaging, and music halls.

French sociologist, Jacques Ellul (1973) criticised the media for its tendency to present information in a way that is often misleading or biased. It uses our senses to deceive. He analysed how mass media shapes public opinion into accepting information as true without critical analysis.

Propaganda then helps to normalise certain perceptions or realities by making them seem natural and expected. People then adopt a particular worldview that is 'normal' and do not question the evidence behind it.

Politicians have long been key drivers promoting the dominant narratives of an elite class, have influenced beliefs, values, and perspectives ensuring the universally agreed "common sense".

One such speech, Marco Rubio, US highest diplomat, Secretary of State lays out the west worldview in Munich on the 14th February 2026.

“...It is a path we have walked together before and hope to walk together again. For five centuries, before the end of the Second World War, the West had been expanding – its missionaries, its pilgrims, its soldiers, its explorers pouring out from its shores to cross oceans, settle new continents, build vast empires extending out across the globe.”

It's necessary to be critical of capitalism as it's complicit in the horrific damage above and the way its structured tends to instrumentalise people. People are valued only as workers. Research also suggest that as people climb the social ladder, their compassionate feelings towards other people decline. Martha, In Thomson, Gill & Goodson (2021p121) initially doing well, becomes anxious as a result of the government's austerity.

In a society, which is hierarchical, held up by armies, police, punitive deterrents and authoritarian-based respectability, the human as variable does not need to be considered. What needs to be known to humans before a decision is made is who has the authority to make it; what the law or policy governing the decision is; what the place of the author in the decision-making ladder is; and what the parameters of the author's decision-making authority are. People are expected to obey the decision or be punished for their disobedience. The proof then returns full circle as the basis for conviction or alienation of the dissident. Memory does not exist for any other social purpose. Facts are defined as objective memory. The rememberers strive to record evidence and achieve objectivity. Maracle, Lee (2015 p1)

P= Perception, the Impact on wellbeing

So it's becoming clear, why Iran is on fire, along with Lebanon, Syria, Gaza, Sudan, Somalia to name but a few of hot spots around the world. I hold my breathe, for more of the same...

What the speech conjures for me is the horror of slavery, settler colonialism, racial capitalism, colonialism, and imperialism while for others it is a 'glorious history'.

I believe that we are all dehumanised in these processes. We are but machines / pawns and as he dehumanise the 'other' yet the spilling the blood is clear. We are human although these experience suggests otherwise.

On this journey to peace, I need to remember to hate the sin, not the sinner!

Still he/they are not asking for forgiveness, in fact he exhorts Europe to put away any guilt and shame of the past and be proud.

“This is why we do not want our allies to be shackled by guilt and shame. We want allies who are proud of their culture and of their heritage, who understand that we are heirs to the same great and noble civilization, and who, together with us, are willing and able to defend it.”

The collapse of this western dominant narrative

Mark Carney, Prime Minister of Canada, just a month before Rubio in Davos gives an address where he says that there is a new world order. He said that there was

“a rupture in the world order, the end of a pleasant fiction and the beginning of a harsh reality”

This speech given in the context of President Trump repeated calls for Canada to become the 51st state as well as the acquisition of Greenland.

Carney also a previous head of the Bank of England as well the head of the Bank of Canada admits that:

“We knew the story of the international rules-based order was partially false that the strongest would exempt themselves when convenient, that trade rules were enforced asymmetrically. And we knew that international law applied with varying rigour depending on the identity of the accused or the victim.

So although the international rules-based order was partially false and that, international law depended on who the US wanted to accuse, Canada benefitted. Now he's very open, he puts his cards on the table.

‘This fiction was useful, and American hegemony, in particular, helped provide public goods, open sea lanes, a stable financial system, collective security and support for frameworks for resolving disputes.’

He continues:

*This bargain no longer works. Let me be direct. We are in the midst of a **rupture, not a transition.***

And as Carney finally confirms “because if we're not at the table, we're on the menu.”

This is reminiscent of the history that the global south, the majority of brown and black people around the world have experienced for at least the past 500 years.

Thomson, Gill & Goodson (2021:p24) argues that we all have intrinsic value. *'In fact, if it were true of everyone that they have no intrinsic value, then nothing could have value'*. Rubio is unaware of his intrinsic value and is instrumentalizing himself as he believes his value as a person comes by dominating others. He needs to portray Western civilization as the dominant civilization and global hegemon, never mind the cost of efficiency to himself and to others.

As I look back at my own experience, it is clear that the politics of propaganda in many ways embedded beliefs that affected my heart and mind and instrumentalised my soul.

In honour of children today, I in some small way hope to remind them/us that although experiences can be catastrophic, we can recover our humanity.

P= Principles of Peace - This is a framework to maintain a peaceful world of wellbeing. Principles of Peace recognises the importance of recovering our spiritual essence, values, and practices that have been lost or distorted.

The purpose of domination whether by country, community, employer, family, friend or foe is to ensure that we lose our sense of self by disconnecting, dis-remembering that everyone has value, that our lives matter.

The first principle of peace is

1. Conscious Awareness - to remember that every person is intrinsically valuable, and

Be mindful that each person can self-instrumentalise themselves by treating oneself as an object. Thomson, Gill & Goodson (2021:p.36). *"Something of intrinsic value is valuable for what it is"* Thomson, Gill & Goodson (2021:p.37).

2. Appreciating who one is and valuing where one is in life. *

3. Be responsible - keep the light shining bright for self, friends, family and others

4. Music - Singing - Gospel song *This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine*

5. Life is sacred - one day we won't be here. Celebrate Today.

* Although wealth is not recognised as potentially ill health it does have the potential to harm. *Thomson, Gill & Goodson (2021:p.78).*

Having wealth we can believe that we are better than others and in doing so can abuse/instrumentalise ourselves and others. The desire to colonise in the way we've discussed above has within it a sense of greed, and accumulation that we're never satisfied. Hence there are billionaires that want to be trillionaires. Often as well having a lot of wealth can lead one to question whether your friends are with you because they like you or not. So this could cause loneliness.

Research also suggests that having wealth can reduce compassion and empathy.

Conclusion

As I reflect on my personal journey of understanding history I discover my place in the world.

Political consciousness is an essential aspect of understanding one's role in the global political landscape. And draw on the works of Aime Césaire, Radhika Desai and Bob Marley to emphasize the need for self-awareness and liberation from colonial thinking.

Self-reflection and awareness of oneself as one among many, reminds us of interconnectedness of all people and the importance of understanding the world around them.

Memory in indigenous societies serves as a means of communal reflection.

The world is rapidly changing, and we don't know in which direction but keep hope alive with daily practices of Peace Principles.

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