

IS A LEARNED MAN NECESSARILY EDUCATED?

DR. T.S.Y. SENGO

This paper tries to look into the notion of alienation as an aftermath of education. It attempt to see how education nurtures man and the way folkloric as well as modern education prepares him to fit into his community and gain a secure understanding of what the meaning of life is or ought to be and how ought men live their lives. Special interest is in the paradox of having a learned man who is not educated; e.g. a man who fails to live usefully in his own community.

Definitions

Education is the total sum of Knowledge Understanding, Experience and Appreciation Knowledge, consists of values, cognition, dispositions and socially and morally acceptable pedagogy.

Understanding deals with the content of education, the methodology and the justification for adopting the what, how and why of a certain education system.

Experience is the actual living of a person; his reality of things and the way he tries to live, with what, when, where, how and why questions.

Appreciation seems to be the highest level of education. It is the maturity capable of seeing abnormalities normal; and sometimes normalities abnormal. It is the ability to see similarities between differences and differences between similarities. It is the ability to bear and tolerate difficulties and situations, live and deal with almost everybody if need be, and deal critically and everlastingly with the self in fear of being spoilt with self-centricity-pomp, show-off etc. If anything, intellectual beauty is realized at this level whereat the individual could be considered for the qualities of a good man, a useful man to others.

Schooling:

For a person to acquire the excellences of education, schooling through the forms of Knowledge, Understanding, Experience and Appreciation is necessarily important. These Forms are a prerequisite for raising one's intellectual ceiling and expanding one's circle of experiences. A person's ceiling and circle are two walls which seem to imprison him in a manner worse than an interrogating cell does. The upper the ceiling goes and the wider the circle becomes, the nearer to education and more free the person becomes. But the one sufficient condition on top of this, for one to qualify into the concept of the educated person is for that person to be useful both theoretically and practically to fellow human beings. In case of failure to meet this condition, the person could be called "great scientist", "degree holder", "a learned man" but not an educated individual.

The nature of man:

Is man "born with distinctive nature or that he acquires it through nurture and environment?"³⁹ The answer is twofold. Partly, human nature is inborn. It is also acquirable. Neither is stagnant. Changes are continuously occurring in the biology and chemistry of the individual in his psychology as well as environment, culture and human life in general. The individual nature of man can therefore develop in one way or another by the kind of nurture to which one is exposed. The environment and its folkloric as well as the humanities within and without, have a lot to offer to the development of human nature. Putting it differently, man is both a natural as well as a social animal.

Man is distinguished from a goat or lion by one basic factor, that he has a mind which could be considered better than that of the natural animals. In fact he is meant to be the master of all creation in this world.

The variations in social men and in human communities or societies are mainly due to the potency of environmental and folkloric impact on the efficacy of deliberate nurture to develop a particular kind of nature. For example, a desert environment which is usually harsh due to its extreme heat, dust, wind, barrenness etc. will have an impact on the nature of its men. Folkloric institutions growing and flourishing from such nature could only

³⁹ Robin Barron, Plato and Education. London. Routledge and Kagan Paul. 1976. p.30.

nurture men from the same footing. By doing that, folklore would certainly alienate men from their own natures as social animals, not only within their microcosms but also in the macrocosm of human race. Individually, one is faced with some inner conflicts of how to satisfy one's desires, be they of nature or nurture.

Folkloric education:

Folklore is educational. It is full of general knowledge and it is experience itself. Its understanding is mainly aesthetical and its appreciative qualities are essentially on the human competence. The educational implications of folkloric values are usually those which seem to be necessary for leading a man to learn the wide range of human purposes and intentions and the conditions in which they are likely to occur. Man has to learn these things so as to understand oneself and other people in order to acquire the ability and interest as well as the methodology, if he wants to increase the sum total of human happiness.

Folklore, like literature, has a role in developing the human competence. This competence is the ability in man to increase one's understanding of and sympathy with the ordinary man - especially showing how and why some men behave in extraordinary ways. Folklore is full of such extraordinary men in its folktales.

The competence also helps the individual to realize that there are people who are very different from ourselves and those we know, and gives us sympathy and understanding of them. The developed human competence enables one see the suggested life styles which could be very different from our own but very possibly much more interesting, exciting and profound.

And yet, folklore could be very destructive in terms of its other roles: inculcating senses of tribalism, nepotism, nationalism, hypocrisy, opportunism, slavery, assistantship, chieftainship and life-long adultery and fornication as a culture's virtues.

In other words, folklore could easily deceive its active participants by its possible and very effective alienation; through which the individual could easily see one; s people as the only people and their values as standard and

static. One could easily worship miracles, wonderments, falsehood, deceit etc. instead of worshipping Allah (S.W), for that matter. One could easily find oneself lost, confused, even a life failure for no good reason at all.

Folklore and the nurturing of man:

How does folklore education nurture man? The notion of preserving and transmitting folklore should have a check point at which some serious criticism is allowed so as to make clear those values which are generally considered virtues and vices respectively.

By doing so, folkloric education could prepare man to understand his own self, his community, and the general public and what life really is to him and to others and his own role to be has to play.

The question of 'how life ought to be' could be attempted by one whose false conceit (i.e. negative or vicious folkloric effect) has been replaced by awareness and sincere acceptance of one's ignorance, shortsightedness and small circle of experiences. This maturity in intellectuality and responsibility is vital if one has to attempt the battle against the established order; deception and misconceptualization of serious matters in life.

African traditional Education and the positive side of folklore have always aimed at the good life which "has been one of the most persistent concerns of men throughout history."⁴⁰ Education was to most African societies a means to an end and not an end in itself. Functionalism and parcticalism was the order of the every day curricula. It was indeed an integrated experience which combined physical training, with character building, manual activities with- intellectual training, and its end objective was to produce an individual who was always and sincerely humble, honest, respectable, skilled, cooperative, understanding and ever useful to others.

While J.A. Majasan praises parents "who have been through the crucible of life patterns not through theoretical courses in institutions and therefore can offer first hand information on how to go through life successfully"⁴¹

⁴⁰ A.B. Fafanwa, *History and Education in Nigeria*. London. Allan and Unwin. 1974. p.15.

⁴¹ J.A. Majasan "Traditional Education and its possible Contribution to. Modern Education" in *West African Journal of Education*, Vol. XIX, No.3. October 1975. pp.423-24.

though the platonic view considers most of them as incompetent in the real process of educating their children. Consider the examples of parents who are professional liars, gluttons, prostitutes, drunkards, racists, rapists, tribal sentimentalists etc. Most of such people would only want to transmit their own values to their children because they don't have the eyes to see themselves as vicious, hence incompetent to give proper education to younger generations.

Folklore, like many other things, is twofold: its positive part is as good as that of modern education - especially on the one notion of usefulness as the end result and its negative part has clear weaknesses which if not shown, could easily destroy a people, a nation or a whole race.

Parents:

Education is a multifarious concept. Many parents use the term "teaching" in a very loose way. They base their claim on "experience is the best teacher." But teaching requires more than mere experience.

Certainly, most parents could instruct, indoctrinate, unpring, punish and control their children but not teach. Even the use of their experiences is questionable. "Many parents believe tht only consious reality or pleasant and wish - fulfilling images should be presented to the child, that he should be exposed only to the sunny side of things. But such one-sided fare nourishes the mind only in a one-sided . way, because real life is not all sunny⁴²". This information implies the fact that such parents are ignorant of even their own folklore which is very rich in both the sunny and dark sides of life.

So before allowing parents to have anything to do with one's child's education, educationists of all specializations should properly educate the parents beyond one's horizon. They should expose them well enough with the proper understanding of life and the right and desirable pedagogy so that they. could serve as special tutors in the home based teaching and learning situations. Dynamism should be a quality inculcated into parents because "progress is only possible to one who is not linked today to what he was

⁴² Bruno Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*. New York. Vintage Books Edition. 1977. p.7.

yesterday, who is not caught for ever in that being which is already but can migrate from it into another”.⁴³

Folklore, education and modern man:

With all its weaknesses, folkloric education, in the traditional sense, prepared man for practical life with some intellectual exercises. In the modern sense, folkloric education would include educational, artistic as well as aesthetic values of the modern man who is confronted with not only the advancement of science and technology but also with the enhancement of humanity. Science, and technology have done a lot for human development. Japan, United States of America and some European countries are good demonstrators of that success. But of course, remarks concerning the dehumanization of man and humanity in some of those areas, have been quite remarkable. Statements such as “there is everything in the States except humanity” are commonly spoken among African visitors.

Certainly, man cannot live on bread alone. Modern Science and technology has not yet been able to deal with sociological, cultural and spiritual predicaments of human nature by using formulaic means.

Folklore does help to solve some of these problems: for example, people perform stories “because the story has an appeal which is universal and has no age limits, it has been used by sages, prophets, and teachers through ages to pass on the great historical traditions and religious insights of a people, to awaken conscience, to spur, to action, to give joy and reflect beauty and to point up a truth by dramatizing it.”⁴⁴ These roles of folklore are very educational and indeed very significant in man’s everyday life. Many people have little experience with outside world. As such the universal appeal is one very strong therapy for diseases such as tribal or colour sentimentalism. Great historical traditions, religious insights, imagination, conscientiousness, joy and reflection of beauty are extremely useful excellences which under modern education could only be inculcated into people by philosophically trained teachers.

⁴³ Leonard M. Marsah, *Nature of Historical Inquiry*: Rinehart & Wiston. 1970. p.8.

⁴⁴ Jeanette Perkins Brown, *The Story-Teller in Religious Education: How to tell stories to Children and Young People*. London. The Religious Education Press Ltd. 1951. p. 6 (emphases mine).

The practical training, i.e. apprenticeship system stands as the cornerstone of folkloric education both traditional and modern. The impact of this training is also seen in sandwich system in engineering and internship in medicine. etc. That's why J.A. Majasan concludes that "the apprenticeship system is the best way of producing competent professionals and it is the cornerstone technique in traditional education"⁴⁵

It is because of the variegated exposures of real and possible imaginary experiences in folkloric life that folklore graduates can possibly be seer, to be part of and closer to their own communities and more able to bear famine, to fight a dragon, to understand surprises etc. In a better manner than a school learned man who is completely alienated from his own community by words and actions. Of course, as stated earlier, folklore is powerful in alienating its graduates into depth of darkness in which ignorance, foolishness and even stupidity are the permanent "friends".

Foreign education:

Most African educational critics see the foreign model of education as a misfit to their circumstances; be it European, American, Asian etc. Because it carries with it most of its cultural and environmental seeds. It is usually a specialized education for the indigenous people which is meant to preserve and transmit relevant values of the respective societies. But colonial objectives of this education was planned to produce continuous "slaves" who would be in their own lands but negating their own values, skins, roots and refusing to work for their own countries. The same people, under a white or coloured master, would do extremely wonderful work. A good recent illustration of this fact was the Tanzanian employees of a Japanese firm known as Kajima. These people worked like bees to the surprise of the public. Certainly, there were other factors such as good pay, good care, and respect from the employer but the historical impact of foreign education haunted their commitments which would naturally differ if employed, let's say, by the University. Mecco or Comworks. "It must be kept in mind that the Europeans, headed by the Church, "undertook the business of education not because it regarded education as good in itself, but because it found that it could not be its own proper work without giving its adherents, and

⁴⁵ J.A. Majasan, op. cit., p.431.

especially the clergy, as much of the formal learning as was required for the study of the sacred writings and for the performance of their religious duties”.⁴⁶ This harsh remark has some relevance.

So education was reduced to the study of the sacred writings as understood by the foreigners, and blind obedience of performing religious duties some of which included disunity among same people, hatred between religions and social disorder of keeping pigs and selling pork in every street in communities’ which are heavily populated by Muslims isn’t this a religious right’s abuse and cause for social unrest?

Modern education:

Modern - education is a product of human effort, everywhere and throughout history. Its purpose is to really educate men of the world so that they can understand and appreciate their similarities as well as their ‘differences. Men who can live together and work together with love, order and peace.

In Africa today, we do not want the so-called modern education which is either heavily western or emphatically eastern; whose inner objectives and even the pedagogy are to Africa’s destruction. Africa is divided today more than ever before. Leaders who are supposed to meet regularly and discuss matters of mutual interest seriously keep aloof to each other because they belong to different soccer teams i.e. Washington, Moscow, Beijing and the like. Similarly, we do not need certificate holders “who are not only unemployable because of incompetence but also do not desire to exert themselves to earn their living”.⁴⁷

One would recommend a Universal but country-based modern education in which mankind and humanity would be the basis of thought, imagination and contributions. An education system which would liberate man from dependence on others, from physical and mental enslavement from spiritual anti ideological fanaticism and from fallacies of superiority versus inferiority complexes.

⁴⁶ A.B. Fafunwa, op. cit., p.73.

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 425 – 6.

The educated African of today, be here in Tanzania or elsewhere, must first and foremost acquire the qualities of a human being and accept wholly that he is a member of the global family of mankind. He must possess and demonstrate, not only knowledge, skill or knack but also somebody of knowledge: understanding of oneself of others of principles for the organization of facts, arguments and validation procedures. He must also show that he has the understanding and appreciation of . the reasons and techniques of the how and why of things; i.e. ability to prove that he has acquired, the necessary “discerning mind and an active conscience”⁴⁸ to justify one major objective of education, the “investment in the future.”⁴⁹

Mzee Jomo Kenyatta recommends that “an individualistic person had no place in the African Society. He would be considered a wizard, a person intending to do harm to his fellow men.”⁵⁰ Professor A.B. Fafunwa recommends further that we need an education which must “release the springs of personality, development, - be concerned- with the individual child’s needs, emotions, wants and fears and intellectual, spiritual and physical growth into a mature adult capable of self-direction through self-discipline. It must be geared towards national (+ international) unity, national (+:’African continental) reconstruction and social as well as economic progress.”⁵¹

The educated versus the learned man:

The attempt of analysis done so far has raised a number of educational issues. For example, formal education has been emphasized because of peculiarity as a life long experience in Schooling. This nature of man has been shown to be complex because of its varied causes. Folklore has been suggested as an educational experience which could be incorporated into modern education. It has been an essential part of African traditional education and essentially the only basic education for the everyday life. Parents have been assessed and seen to require re-education if they are to assist their children in matters of Education Modern man has been seen to

⁴⁸ Innovation. No.33 March 1982 . Palais Wilson CH - 1211 Geneva 14.

⁴⁹ Radiance No.5: September - December 1983 MSS Zone A Nigeria.

⁵⁰ Jomo Kenyatta, Facing Mount Kenya. Nairobi. East African Publishing House. 1966. p.10.

⁵¹ A.B. Fafunwa. op. cit., p.241 (emphases mine).

be more confused but complex to handle. So he requires a better system of education which re-directs him to a better useful role to others. Foreign education has been disapproved for reasons of irrelevance and destruction of its graduates, Modern education has been redefined to cater for all human beings.

The overall aim of this analysis has been to differentiate a learned man from the educated person. Not every learned man is a misfit to his community but according to this paper, a good number of such people, have acquired a lot of knowledge or skill, but have missed one or two things which are central to their everyday life, 'For example, a Ph. D holder, be it in any field, ought not be seen as too high to reach, too busy to contact, too smart to touch, too pompous to look at, too rude to talk to, too academic to live otherwise; and worse still is for such a person to consider himself as the only personality, very special and very intelligent.

The educated man, after having realized that what he knows is very little compared to better knower, accepts the fact that he is just like any other human being and his role is to study, and as well as understand matters of life so that he can be more useful to other people. All he does would be disinterested because of his high-powered and deep-rooted objective of serving others, his nation, his continent and the whole world. Because of his understanding, his behaviour would demonstrate to the public his qualities of, being good, resourceful useful; hence educated.

In conclusion, a learned man could or could not necessarily be educated but an educated man ought to be learned on top his being good and useful.