



Remembering Antique Master Of Education: A Postmodern Reception of Milton's "Of Education"

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ABSTRACT

The world has seen and the earth has produced many great masters of education who successfully experimented with educational methods. In this series of postmodern reception of ancient masters of education this article will focus on John Milton's (1608-1674) model conception of education and educational technique. This research paper will further concentrate on Milton's idea on the role of language in the educational methods. This will be our endeavour to map his concept of selection of the place of education. How has history dealt with him? Milton's postmodern reception will be our final focus that this paper will meditate.

KEYWORDS : Antique Masters of Education, Milton's Idea of Education, Role of Language, Place Selection, Postmodern Reception

INTRODUCTION: Miltonic Mountains include many valleys of blindness, but what surprises us is not the depth of it, but the height of the mountain like Paradise Lost (1668). Milton and Paradise Lost have become synonymous for centuries. Poet Milton was politically obsessed with Puritanism. Apart from this patit interpolation with art and politics, he was a polished educationist. He has written so many educational treaties and documents. Areopagitica (1644) and Of Education (1644) are two such widely familiar educational treaties. This article will focus John Milton as perfect educationist and his affirmative reception in the 21st century.

EARLY MILTON: Born in Bread Street, Cheapside, London, John Milton (1608-1674) has a swinging boyhood. He had never the taste of conventional education. Though his elementary education started in St Paul's School, London, and at Cambridge, he left in unfinished. He temporarily shifted in Horton and ruminated on creative art and music. In later life Milton came and completed his higher education. He was unusual child who could read, write and speak in Latin and many other languages like Greek, Hebrew, French and Italian. This enormity of recognition with many internationally acclaimed gave Milton the true spirit of language education. In 1644 Milton wrote an exclusive essay on education entitled as Of Education where propounded an ideal educational policy for the betterment of existing education system. Of Education is a prose treaty dealing with Milton's dream educational system.

RELATING MILTON WITH ANCIENT MASTERS: In his adaptation of many international languages Milton came sharply in contact with ancient masters of education like Plato, Aristotle and Socrates. In shaping the idea of Milton the written documents of such ancient masters contributed much. Milton was a classic not by birth, but by breeding. His classic trend was early observed in his adaptation of Homer and Virgil while writing Paradise Lost. The English Civil War, which began in 1642, had an enormous effect on Milton that changed his world view thoroughly. English power came in the hands of Charles I. This switch over of the royal power once again molded Milton from within. Milton had the dream of becoming a minister and ambition of becoming power holder. This came as disturbance in the life of Milton. The marriage with Mary Powell and later with Katherine Woodcock and finally with Elizabeth Minshull came as early misery to Milton. This early misery brought him early maturity of about both life and education. The execution of Charles I in 1649 changed the colour of European politics and came to Milton as irreparable loss.

MILTON'S CONCEPT OF IDEAL EDUCATION: There can be no greater teacher than misery. Misery taught Milton well in his blindness and misfortunes guided him throughout this episode. It was during this time Milton had formed an ideal texture of education. The principal motive of education is to 'repair'. It is repair in the sense of inclusion of what is lacking in him and exclusion of what is excessive in him:

The end then of Learning is to repair the ruines of our first Parents by regaining to know God aright, and out of that knowledge to love him,

to imitate him, to be like him, as we may the nearest by possessing our souls of true vertue, which being united to the heavenly grace of faith makes up the highest perfection.
(Of Education, page 631)

In his idea of ideal education Milton is largely obsessed with Biblical knowledge. The disobedience of Adam and Eve and the fruit of forbidden tree caused the misery of mankind. God sent Jesus to redeem mankind from such curse. Jesus is the greatest teacher who taught mankind of love and about love with love. He came and repaired the goodness in the men. The end of good teacher should be teaching via love. Teaching will repair the loss in him or the lack in him. Judas betrayed and the mission remained unfinished. Ultra modern science and technology has diminished such goodness and has created a different reality, where everything seems as illusion. Mankind is marching first towards this illusion. Media, technology, cyber technology have resulted a new reality which is often misleading. This misguidance is a betrayal. Betrayal reminds us Judas. Postmodern reality has come with such air deception.

MILTON AND LANGUAGE OF EDUCATION: Dealing carefully with language is equally imperative as with the case of acquiring wisdom and knowledge. Language is the most active weapon of communication. It is a useful tool to convey an idea through oral exploration or verbal utterance. Any language, believed Milton, is an instrument of reflection a concept and its verbal revelation. In the educational system language does play a vital role. In that Milton himself is a perfect example because he had the fair knowledge and experience of adapting more than one language. Milton was noninterventionist enough in his observation of language. Ideal educational system must embrace all corpus good and adjustable language. In dealing with language business Milton had the international worldview towards its appropriation. He was strictly against mother dialect:

And seeing every Nation affords not experience and tradition enough for all kind of Learning, therefore we are chiefly taught the Languages of those people who have at any time been most industrious after Wisdom; so that Language is but the Instrument conveying to us things usefull to be known. And though a Linguist should pride himself to have all the Tongues that Babel cleft the world into, yet, if he have not studied the solid things in them as well as the Words & Lexicons, he were nothing so much to be esteem'd a learned man, as any Yeoman or Tradesman competently wise in his Mother Dialect only.
(Of Education, page 631)

After 1980s the world has seen many unexpected changes. The entry of media culture, high and popular culture has complicated the life more and more. If life becomes bundle of complications knowledge and learning cannot remain unaffected. Language was classified as language of narration and language of science and technology. Advancement in the field of science, technology and entry of high and popular culture the curtain between narrative language and scientific

language is removed. As the boundary of separation is removed and as the difference is no more both dealing with language and adaptation of it has become more complex. At this stage Milton's may seem melt in the postmodern air or wave in the tide popular culture.

MILTON AND IDEA OF NOBLE EDUCATION: In the essay which is taken here for postmodern supervision Milton has formulated the design of virtuous and noble education. Milton has narrated its primary step as laborious. In such education there should be smoothness, greenness, and goodly prospect. As usual Milton is obsessed with music. Noble education will be distributed as melody. Virtuous and noble education must have the spontaneity of a melody. Noble education will be melodious. It is almost like harp of Orpheus which has melody and benumbing effect. Harp of Orpheus rescued his wife, though lost later. Noble education would teach with besmearing effect and will save many:

... I will point ye out the right path of a vertuous and noble Education; laborious indeed at the first ascent, but else so smooth, so green, so full of goodly prospect, and melodious sounds on every side, that the Harp of Orpheus was not more charming. I doubt not but ye shall have more adoe to drive our dullest and laziest youth, our stocks and stubbs from the infinite desire of such a happy nurture, then we have now to hale and drag our choisest and hopefulest Wits to that asinine feast of sowthistles and brambles which is commonly set before them, as all the food and entertainment of their tenderest and most docible age. (Of Education, page 632)

Noble education must be generous and complete. It is the skillful toil of the distributor that will serve it more effective. Virtuous education must fit the receiver justly and fruitfully:

I call therefore a compleat and generous Education that which fits a man to perform justly, skilfully and magnanimously all the offices both private and publick of Peace and War. And how all this may be done between twelve, and one and twenty, less time then is now bestow'd in pure trifling at Grammar and Sophistry, is to be thus order'd. (Of Education, page 632)

MILTON: POSITIONING PLACE, PRONUCIATION AND PRACTICE

Milton had the dream of ideal classroom. The place must contain the lodging of one fifty people. Twenty attendants will receive them. All will remain under the supervision of one authority. Many will do, meaning perform and the other will direct, meaning instruct:

First, to find out a spatious house and ground about it fit for an Academy, and big enough to lodge a hundred and fifty persons, whereof twenty or thereabout may be attendants, all under the government of

one, who shall be thought of desert sufficient, and ability either to do all, or wisely to direct, and oversee it done. (Of Education, page 633)

Though technology was far removed from Milton, he was equally an observant eye in forming a place ideal for education. A postmodern man may think of smart room. But the ideal classroom as perceived by Milton was not less effective. It was not less modern in comparison to time. Clear and distinct pronunciation was the preliminary condition of Milton's idea of noble education:

For their Studies, First they should begin with the chief and necessary rules of some good Grammar, either that now us'd, or any better: and while this is doing, their speech is to be fashion'd to a distinct and clear pronuntiation, as near as may be to the Italian, especially in the Vowels. (Of Education, page 633)

Milton gave priority to both grammar and proper practice. With these the dream of virtuous and noble education can never smell the reality. This two joint endeavour will elevate the mental state of the receiver of knowledge:

Next to make them expert in the usefulest points of Grammar, and withall to season them, and win them early to the love of vertue and true labour, ere any flattering seducement, or vain principle seise them wandering, some easie and delightful Book of Education would be read to them; whereof the Greeks have store, as Cebes, Plutarch, and other Socratic discourses. (Of Education, page 633)

Exercise of proper art and eloquence is another important decisive factor of Noble Education. While performing this fear and anxiety should be kept aloof:

That they may despise and scorn all their childish, and ill-taught qualities, to delight in manly, and liberall Exercises: which he who hath the Art, and proper Eloquence to catch them with, what with mild and effectual perswasion... (Of Education, page 633)

CONCLUSION: Milton did have a fair foresight about ideal knowledge and education. His long meditation finally outcome this essay we concentrated so far. Knowledge, its distribution, language, place of presentation, idea of grammar and eloquent practice may sound old, stereotype and backdated. But his idea of Noble Education is never old because good is often timeless. Milton propounded one such Noble idea of Education where Peace will kiss War, Sky will whisper in the ear of Earth to generate a new universe.

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