

The Pedagogical Duty of the Intelligentsia

(To Speak Up, To Write Down and To Reach Out)

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“The living expression of the nation is the moving consciousness of the whole of the people; it is the coherent, enlightened action of men and women. The collective building up a destiny is the assumption of responsibility on the historical scale.”

Frantz Fanon

Introduction

In *Intellectuals in Developing Societies*, Syed Hussein Alatas defines the intelligentsia as “those who have gone through higher formal and modern education, the specialists and the professionals, and those who have acquired higher-level education by other means. In the developing countries the intelligentsia functions as a group.”¹ Intellectuals, according to him can be defined as “a person who is engaged in thinking about ideas and non-material problems using the faculty of reason.”² Philip Pomper, in his study of Russian intellectual movement, highlights the distinction between the hermetic intellectual against those real intelligentsia, which we might identify today as *public intellectuals*. “The intelligentsia are distinguishable from both intellectual workers and pure intellectuals, from the former by their concern with ultimate questions, and from the latter by their active commitment to human self-fulfillment. They tend to reject the idea of engaging in any cultural activity for its

¹ Syed Hussein Alatas, *Intellectuals in Developing Societies*. (London: Frank Cass, 1977) p. 9.

² Ibid.,

own sake, and to think of the arts and sciences as activities which may help them in their larger quest.”³

The Ethical Vocation

An intellectual, as defined by Edward W Said, is an individual “endowed with a faculty for representing, embodying, articulating a message, a view, an attitude, philosophy or opinion to it, as well as for, a public. And this role has an edge to it, and cannot be played without a sense of being someone whose place it is publicly to raise embarrassing questions, to confront orthodoxy and dogma (rather than produce them), to be someone who cannot easily be co-opted by governments or corporations, and whose *raison d’etre* is to represent all those people and issues that are routinely forgotten or swept under the rug.”⁴ In other words, the true intellectuals are those that have the moral courage to speak for truth to those in power since “...ideally the intellectual represents emancipation and enlightenment, “ and that they “ought to remain an organic part of an ongoing experience in society: of the poor, the disadvantaged, the voiceless, the unrepresented, the powerless.”⁵ Most importantly, as Said reminds: “The role of intellectual is to say the truth to power, to address the central authority in every society without hypocrisy, and to choose the method, the style, the critique best suited for the purposes.....[the] main goal is.. to give utterance not to mere fashion and passing fads but to real ideas and values.”⁶

³ Read Philip Pomper, *The Russian Revolutionary Intelligentsia*. (New York: Thomas Y Crowell Co., 1971), p.1

⁴ Edward Said, *Representations of the Intellectual* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996), p.11

⁵ Ibid., p.113

⁶ Edward Said, *Peace and Discontents*. (New York: Vintage, 1996), pp. 184-5

The role of intellectual in society is a moral obligation in as much as it is being accorded a privileged position to deliberate and shape ideas in society, such that the “capacity to understand others is the most valuable asset of the intellectual.”⁷ To the intellectuals in developing societies, Fanon’s call is therefore pertinent: “It is not only necessary to fight for the liberty of your people. You must also teach the people once again, and first learn once again yourself, what is the full stature of a man; and this you must do for as long as the fight lasts.”⁸ This is exactly the pedagogical duty that this paper attempts to emphasize.

However, it is not uncommon that we hear the lamentations on certain limitations that circumscribed the roles of intellectuals in society, to the point where cynicism and combative language of politics takes place at the expense of diagnosing the problems and issues at hand. Instead of narrating their so-called intellectual plight, it will be more productive if the intelligentsia/intellectual themselves reflect – “what we have done so far?” The views of Jawdat Said, a contemporary Syrian writer is relevant for our reflection:

“It may be more accurate to say that the problem of subjugation does not lie in the oppressors or their demeaned slaves, but in their “teachers” or “people of knowledge.” The problem does not lie in the politician; the problem lies in the intellectual, the salt of the earth, the maker of a culture with all its institutions. We should lay bare the reality that politician is the instrument of the intellectual and not the other way around. ...Comprehension and teaching are the roles of the intellectual. And if intellectuals fail to understand and take responsibility for the duality of the world around them, we should, only blame ourselves...We live in an era that witnesses an absence of true intellectuals. The problem we face is within the intellectuals and “people of knowledge.” They are the resigned ones, those who do not trust what they possess. They revere the power of body rather than true power of the intellect. They are so insecure about their knowledge that they are incapable of fertilizing people’s minds with the understanding that will give them

⁷ Karl Mannheim, “The Sociology of Intellectuals,” *Theory, Culture & Society*, Vol. 10, 1993, p.77

⁸ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*. (New York: Grove Press, 196)

the vaccine against enslavement.....It is unfortunate that our intellectuals have bewitched the world by manufacturing silence.”⁹

Jawdat’s frank comment is hard to be dismissed indeed. The intellectual’s silence and indifference is a cultural crisis of today. What we see today is not of a total absence of intellectual activities or its lack of rigour, but the very intellectual preoccupation and concern. *Anti-humanities* of the humanities and the pervasive anti-intellectualism within and without the institutions of higher learning, rendered more difficulties for the development of substantive intellectual engagement. Jawdat’s critique points to the importance of the intellectuals themselves to “remain as critical of itself as of all other groups.”¹⁰ Thus, writes Mannheim: “It is the high calling of the intellectuals, aided by their self-reflexive sociological orientation; to do what is necessary in this historical hour: to bring their self-consciousness to completion and lived according to its newly-won insights.”¹¹

Academic narcissism of addressing only to the privileged academic audience, (often in far away places) instead of the society/context which they are studying/researching, alongside the imitativeness towards the scholarship of the metropolitan centers, meant a greater divergence between intellectual activities and the society that is in need of the intellectuals’ directions, encouragement, and propositions. More unfortunate is when hermetic academism is seen as fountainhead of intellectual excellence, while those intellectual engagements in the public domain, is seen as unscientific, and polemical, perceived as intellectually unbecoming,

⁹ Jawdat Said, “Law, Religion and the Prophetic Method of Social Change,” *Journal of Law and Religion*, Vol. XV, Nos., 1-2, 2000-2001, pp. 109-110.

¹⁰ Karl Mannheim, *Essays on Sociology of Culture*. (London: Routledge&Kegan Paul, 1971), p. 170

¹¹ Karl Mannheim, “The Sociology of Intellectuals,” p. 80

since many are trapped in the flawed notion of objective neutrality in scholarship. Moreover when intellectual dissent is seen as unpatriotic, while unconformity as disruptive to the status quo, the intellectual life will be ever more be stifled. Also in the anxiety of publish or perish, it will be more advantageous to contain oneself in the purely academic audience than to engage in the public arena, where unpopularity (to the engaged intellectual) is inevitable. The pervasiveness of this task remains a daunting intellectual task that is to be resolved or at least, mitigated.

A Functioning Intelligentsia

Karl Mannheim has identified intelligentsia as the “social groups whose special task is to provide an interpretation of the world for society.”¹² What we need at present is a group of intelligentsia that only have: (a) a commitment for common humanity, but also has (b) an empathy and sensitivity of particularity ; (c) the ability to sustain an intellectual rigour and responsibility and (d) at the same time highly committed for reconstruction for the betterment of his society, who affirms the fact that “to exist, humanly, is to name to world, to change it”¹³ Herein lies the importance of a functioning intelligentsia. The latter according to Syed Hussien Alatas, must fulfill four cardinal responsibilities: (1)the ability to pose problem of their society; (2) defining the problems encountered; (3) analyzing the problems and (4) finding solution to the problems.¹⁴

¹² Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*. (London: Routledge&Kegan Paul, 1976), p. 9

¹³ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. (New York: Continuum, 1998), p. 76

¹⁴ Alatas, *Intellectuals in Developing Societies*, p. 15

Similarly, Edward Said envisaged an engaged intellectual who are concerned of the affairs of his people. Their duty is to make these representations for the public, in the name of preserving rights, truth, ethical integrity and justice, for otherwise, warns Alatas: “a society without a functioning group of intellectuals is deprived of a certain of level of consciousness and insights into vital problems.”¹⁵ In this era of manufactured consent and packaged opinions, the weakening power of judgment is ever more a serious problem. As it is, in a neoliberal and capitalist context, there are more (effective) instruments that dull the capacity to think critically than one that nurtures it, which Erich Fromm regards as “more dangerous to our democracy than many of the open attacks against it.”¹⁶ If not kept in checked, this easily leads to a situation of the consensus for stupidity. Herein lies the urgency for the nurturing and the dissemination of *critical consciousness* that must be led by those who are able, especially those with an advantageous cultural capital and informational, educational and dissemination infrastructures.

In confronting the distortion and corruption of ideas, it becomes imperative that the intelligentsia sees a twofold task to counter those ideas from entrenching in society. Foremost they themselves must be aware of themselves of the sinister of vulgar ideas, (especially those that are packaged eloquently) which in turn make them to avoid appropriating, tolerating and disseminating it. Second, the intelligentsia taking the lead in public education, to make every responsible citizen recognises and rejects misleading utterances and doubletalk.¹⁷ In a democratic setting, the domain for public education is one

¹⁵Alatas, *Intellectuals in Developing Societies*, p. 10

¹⁶ Erich Fromm, *Beyond the Chains of Illusion*, (London: Abacus 1962), p. 1

¹⁷ Erich Fromm, *The Sane Society*. (New York: Henry Holt, 1990), p. 159, 170

of the sites where the struggle and competition of ideas takes place. Herein lies the role of a committed and engaged intelligentsia who are to ensure and nurture the emancipation of thinking, that is, the zeal to speak against moral-ethical corruption in society. “The intellectual’s role is dialectically, oppositionally to uncover and elucidate the contest...., to challenge and defeat both an imposed silence and the normalised quiet of unseen power whenever and wherever possible.”¹⁸

Thus the intelligentsia as “teachers”, be it in formal and informal setting, shaping and nurturing the public minds, should see that “[t]he teaching task is above all a professional task that requires constant intellectual rigor and the stimulation of epistemological curiosity, of the capacity to love, of creativity, of scientific competence and the rejection of scientific reductionism. The teaching task also requires the capacity to fight for freedom, without which the teaching task becomes meaningless.”¹⁹ To fulfill this moral-ethical and intellectual obligation is therefore imperative:

“we must have the courage and ethical integrity to denounce any and all attempts to actively dehumanize the very students from whom we make our living as teachers...[We need] a pedagogy of hope that is informed by tolerance, respect, and solidarity. A pedagogy that rejects the social construction of images that dehumanize the “other” : a pedagogy that points out that in our construction of the other we become intimately tied with that other; a pedagogy that teaches us that by dehumanizing the other we become dehumanized ourselves. In short, we need a pedagogy of hope that guides us toward thje critical road of truth, rather than myths and lies, toward reclaiming our dignity and our humanity....”²⁰

¹⁸ Edward Said, *Humanism and Democratic Criticism*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), p.135

¹⁹ Paulo Freire, *Teachers as Cultural Workers*. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1998), p. 4

²⁰ Bartolome and Macedo, “Dancing With Bigotry: The Poisoning of Racial and Ethnic Identities,” *Harvard Educational Review*, 67, 2, 1997. p. 243

Simply put, the idea of a concrete and critical consciousness must be the goal in our project of social and intellectual emancipation to the public. It is important at this juncture to emphasise that in as much that the intelligentsia have the will power and intellectual commitment towards public education, in the name of socio-cultural emancipation, it should never be undertaken in the fashion of all-knowing paternalistic role, in which the pedagogical approach remains teacher-centred. Freirean critical discourse identify this as banking approach in teaching/learning and such regressive educational practices will have serious implication, such that it: “creates inhibitions and suppresses the development of personal autonomy and intelligent judgment. Most individuals are not educated to develop their intellectual powers but subjected to process imitation and emotional suggestion which train them for an unthinking acceptance of values and blind obedience.”²¹

Agents of Change

The role of the media elite (not excluding discerning entertainment/artistic circles) and the teaching community are the two main agents that could allow for the generation of critical and creative thinking. Amongst their tasks are (a) to expose the various aberrations and distortions of meanings that have persisted in society’s thought and (b) to take a lead in the public domain, to expose the general public on perspectives and tools as well the importance of critical thinking. Therefore no one should ignore nor underestimate the role played by the mass media in dissemination of productive and/or erroneous information and knowledge to the larger public. It is in this site, especially in the case where there is one dominant media source that dictates a certain informational slant, that every responsible

²¹ Gunter W Remmling, *The Sociology of Karl Mannheim*. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), p. 114

citizens need to serious and consistent attention. Not only we should hope and plan for a discerning reading public, we also need to make sure that those at the helm of the media position are intellectually and ethically informed individuals, who have the intellectual ability to speak for truth, and recognize the distortions and manipulations of ideas in society as an impediment to progress and enlightened public. Certainly, the task is especially important for educators for are the one who could initiate and nurture the site for critical social thinking. Hence “educators need to become “cultural brokers” to help to create a psychologically beneficial pedagogical space for all students. Educators also need to make sure that they do not teach a form of literacy that gives learners a lasting experience of subordination.

But having said this, we do not mean that the will and act of criticisms should only be the privileged of this group, since in the end, any form of social emancipation to be successful, must be rooted at the larger the public level.²² When this level is attained, then even the ideas of the first proponent of critical discourse will be subjected to serious scrutiny so as to improve upon and/or correct those ideas that were discoursed/disseminated earlier. It is this intellectual openness, the spirit to improve our ideas so as to improve our act and life that makes this very existence a dignified and meaningful one. The intellectual openness requires critical self-consciousness, intellectual determination to engage in *problem-posing* perspectives and hence, the moral courage to speak up against all form of authoritarian authority that can operate in the operate in cultural, political, economic, social and spiritual spheres of life.

²² By this we mean, the approach of bottom-up rather than top-down is crucial in certain stage, especially when reform is to be sustained and regenerated into another level.

Writing Truth to Empower

But how to we make sure that such speaking truth to power reaches to a larger public, or even correcting the public itself? First we have to recognize the fact that the task of *public intellectuals* or the intelligentsia is to ensure the deliberation of ideas at the public domain. In a modern complex society, this is only possible through *writing discourse*. A point made by Noam Chomsky stresses this point:

“In fact, writing is an indispensable method for interpersonal communication in a complicated society. Not in a hunter-gatherer tribe of fifteen people; then you can all talk to one another. But in a world that’s more complicated than that, intellectual progress and cultural progress and moral progress for that matter require forms of interaction and communicative interchange that go well beyond that of speaking situations. So, sure, people who can participate in that have ways of enriching their won thought, of enlightening others, of entering into constructive discourse with others which they all gain by. That’s a form of empowerment....Doing things that will stimulate critical analysis, self-analysis, and analysis of culture and society is very crucial. In fact, it seems to me that part of the core of all education ought to be the development of systems of intellectual self-defense and also stimulation of the capacity for inquiry, which means also collective inquiry.. ..”²³

Similarly Freire’s humility and conviction of commitment to writing is worthy for our consideration:

“[W]riting should never be viewed only as a question of personal satisfaction. I do not write simply because it gives me pleasure. I write because I feel politically committed, because I would like to convince other people, without lying to them, that what I dream about and what I speak about and what causes me to struggle are worth writing about. The political nature of **the act of writing**, in turn, requires **ethical commitment**. I cannot affirm that which I know is false. I cannot give the impression that I am knowledgeable about this or that subjects if I am not. I cannot quote a single phrase that intimates top my readers that I have read the entire work of the quoted author. I will lose the authority to continue to write or speak about Christ if I, at the same time, discriminate against my neighbor because he or she is black or because he or she is a blue-collar worker.”²⁴

²³ Gary A Olson & L. Worsham, (eds.) *Critical Intellectuals on Writing*. (State University of New York Press, 2003), p.57

²⁴ Paulo Freire, *Letters to Cristina, Reflections on My Life and Work*. (New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 2

Writing to empower will only have true meaning if it starts from the will and commitment to address the problem of a society, analyzing and providing solutions/alternatives to the current situation. Thus for those who write and claim that they are writing for literature/commentary/ report etc per se, not interested with anything else, such a position is never tenable, nor should they be ever accepted, since “[e]very intellectual whose *métier* is articulating and representing specific views, ideas, and ideologies logically aspires to making them work in a society. The intellectual who claims only to write for him or herself, or for the sake of pure learning, or abstract science, is not to be, and must not be believed. As the well known twentieth-century writer, Jean Genet once said, the moment you publish essays in a society you have entered political life; so if you want not to be political do not write essays or speak out.”²⁵ Perhaps it is not too far fetched to say that for those who are interested to discourse or engaging ideas in society, the commitment to writing and scholarship (in contrast to aural/oral exhortation and pamphleteerism) for only through this that ideas can be subjected to accountability, scrutiny, exchange and reformulation.

Affirming [Con] *text*

The ability and sensitivity to affirm the relevance of text only through its context is an important intellectual prerequisite. In this regards, writers in whatever domain, as intelligentsia of their society should constantly bear in mind in their writing of the need to make their *text* in consonance of the *context* much that it addressed its needs and challenges. The commitment to write for social engagement is paramount, as Freire puts it well: “These texts should address men and women in the context of their transformation. These texts

²⁵ Edward Said, “Gods that Always Fail,” *Raritan*, Vol. 13, Issue 4, 1994.

can't be just a description of the new reality, or a mere retelling of a paternalistic theme....Their objective shouldn't be to describe something to be memorized. Quite the contrary, they should 'problematize' situations, present the challenge of reality that the learners confront everyday. These texts must embody a challenge in themselves and as such they should be regarded dialectically by the learners and the educator so that they can delve deeply into the texts' meaning."²⁶ However, in the process of writing, Freire caution us the way we formulate our ideas. He opines: "The process of writing on a particular theme is not just a narrative act. In perceiving the theme as a phenomenon that takes place in a concrete reality and that mediates men and women, we writers must assume a gnosiological attitude...What we must not do is overdefine the concept of the theme, or even take what it involves as a given fact; nor should we simply describe it or explain it..."²⁷ Elsewhere he adds: "For only as men grasp the themes [of their times] can they intervene in reality instead of remaining mere onlookers. And only by developing a permanently critical attitude can men overcome a posture of adjustment."²⁸

In short, it is only in literate/print culture that intellectual development can progress and develop into a new level, for it allows effective dissemination, affirmation and reaction by the public or by other intellectual circles. Herein lies the importance of the elite in media, journalism, education and literary circles in affirming the duty of insisting on truth, justice, morality and freedom instead of untruth, injustice, immorality and tyranny. As Mills puts it

²⁶ Paulo Freire, *The Politics of Education: Culture, Power, and Liberation*. (Massachusetts: Bergin&Garvey Publishers, 1985), pp. 22-3

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 112

²⁸ Read, Paulo Freire, *Education for Critical Consciousness*. (New York: Seabury Press, 1974), pp.5-6

succinctly: “The intellectual ought to be the moral conscience of his society, at least with reference to the value of truth, for in the defining instance, that is his politics. And he ought also to be a man absorbed in the attempt to know what is real and what is unreal.”²⁹

Objection to the Dominant notion of *Objectivity*

Another aspect of writing that needs to be given adequate attention is the fact that the question of styles of writing should never be reduced of its aesthetic articulation, intelligent words and sophisticated arrangement, but most importantly, the content of the writing and the approach taken in presenting the ideas. The view of Noam Chomsky is useful: “one should not try to persuade; rather, you should try to lay out the territory as best as you can so that other people can use their own intellectual powers to work out for themselves what they think is right or wrong. For example, I try, particularly in political writing, to make it extremely clear in advance exactly where I stand. In my view, the idea of neutral objectivity is largely fraudulent.”³⁰ In this regards Alatas’ clarification on objectivity is useful: “The truth is that objectivity is an attitude of mind, a consciousness of problems, a scrupulousness in selecting and assessing the data, a commitment to truth, born out of the character and outlook of the scholar. His commitment to a purpose is irrelevant as far as objectivity is concerned. A scholar, for example, may be convinced that religion is necessary for his society. On the ground of its significance, he makes a study of it. His purpose is to show this very significance. He thereby does not automatically deserve to be condemned as

²⁹ “On Knowledge and Power,” in Irving L. Horowitz, (ed.) *Power, Politics and Power: The Collected Essays of C Wright Mills*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 611

³⁰ Gary A Olson & L. Worsham, (eds.) *Critical Intellectuals on Writing*, p.55

unobjective. There is no scholarship which is not tied to a purpose. It is the way the scholarship is developed that makes it objective or otherwise.”³¹

Indeed, what we hear today on the persistent assertion of the need to be “objective” is actually an aversion to take an ethical position, which unfortunately deemed as ‘unscientific’ or intellectually partisan. This intellectual’s ambivalence and neutrality, and their doubt of their responsibilities, means limiting their potentialities for an advancement of enlightenment to those who look up to them for ideas, direction and advocacy. This is clearly an abdication of intellectuals of their responsibilities to be the agent of change. This certainly departs from the ideas of a modernizing intellectual as envisaged by Jose Ortega Gasset. As one writer concludes, “If our intellectuals are typically less robust, that may have more to do with their elaborate self-doubt than with the intractable facts of life in today’s culture...today’s intellectuals mistrust missionary enterprises and regard as plainly false anyone’s claim to serve as custodian or authoritative interpreter of the high culture.”³² However, when the intelligentsia refused to assume the intellectual position in their society, than others will do, which could possibly worsen the situation, especially when demagogues speak in the language of irresponsible comfort, peppered with anti-intellectualism and emotive religiosity, yet devoid of genuine concern and responsibility, which most often excite a frustrated crowd, more than anything else.

³¹ Refer Alatas, *Modernization and Social Change: Studies in Modernization, Religion, Social Changes and Development in South-East Asia*. (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1972), pp. 182-3.

³² Robert Boyers, “Culture and the Intellectual at the Height of the Time,” *Tri Quarterly*, 80, Winter, 1990/91, p. 168

Unmasking Aberrations

Another crucial task of the intelligentsia is to combat ideas that will fetter human freedom and impede the unfolding of their human potentials and strengths. Also the functioning intelligentsia should assume the task of correcting misleading positions, renouncing any form of hatred and hostility, especially those who have no qualms of appropriating religion in their criminal and ideological cause or using political and coercive instruments to silence dissenters. This could only be achieved if the intelligentsia see their mission as both an intellectual and an ethical ones, which in turn could only be affirmed if there is a sense of hope and determination, informed by the universal religious and humanitarian values. Hence in speaking truth to power, through writing, with the aim to empower the emancipation of thought amongst the general public should never be seen lightly.

This is certainly not easy. But nothing is impossible as long as there is a human will to act, buttressed with consistency and persistency in the endeavour. Certainly a determination for critical postures and skepticism, and a sense of hope must exist. This requires a seriousness to reflect, and be critical to any forms of act or thinking that dehumanize our life. This in turn requires our creativeness to respond and address the situation accordingly. In addition, all interpretation of meanings must be subjected to scrutiny and reformulation, in as much as all forms of authority can be made accountable for its doing.

Thus the unmasking of vulgar ideas that invariably incarnated as “politically-correct”, ‘neutral’ expressions, is an ethical-moral obligation that every responsible citizens needs to take. This in turn requires one to acknowledge the fact that the vested interest of those in

power is real and to recognize the fact that the “unquestioning subservience to authority in today’s world is one of the greatest threats to an active and moral intellectual life.”³³ Hence to highlight, expose and correct aberration, distortion and corruption of ideas and practices in society is one step that should be taken by the responsible intelligentsia. If the intelligentsia must empower themselves with an ethical perceptiveness to correct these aberrations, this task can never be accomplished unless we take a collective responsibilities of those distortions and convulsion of ideas.³⁴ It is only through collective vigilance and the will to (re)correct them, that we can ensure the mitigation of vulgar ideas (and therefore barbaric acts) in our midst.

Needless to say, in such endeavour and commitment, only truth must triumph before anything else, be it one’s own notion of religion, ethnicity and nation. To be on guard against any moral and intellectual exclusivism (or amoral for that matter) is therefore an imperative task to be undertaken. The submission to the finality of ideas, that is, surrendering one’s intellectual obligation and closure for dissenting alternatives, must be refused altogether. The way out – the importance of reading the world so as to discern the word in its context, the hidden ideological interest behind it. And the only way to bring us out of this ideological subjugation is through the realisation and the practice of intellectual engagement in which, as Freire puts it aptly: “The reading of the world must precede the reading of the word.”

³³ Said, “Gods that Always Fail”.

³⁴ For a short and clear exposition on this point, read Clifford G Christians, “Can The Public Be Held Accountable?” *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, Vol. 3, No.1, pp. 50-58

Conclusion: A Calling of Self-Reflexivity

To sum up, the pedagogical duty of the intelligentsia is not only to ensure they fulfil their intellectual obligation, not only to disseminate ideas for social emancipation, but their commitment to ensure that they are always intellectually aware of the changes and contexts of their socio-political environment. For the intelligentsia who are committed towards critical emancipation, their lead in public and intellectual discourses must be sustained by rigour and intolerance for any forms of mediocrity and prejudicial essentialism. Such discourses require a commitment in writing and exchanging, without which no discourse is ever possible. Yet even when ideas have been documented in writing, it should nowhere be seen as finality or permanent. A point made by Freire is relevant here: “What is expected of those who write with responsibility is a permanent and continuing search that rejects puritanical hypocrisy or veiled shamelessness. In the final analysis, what is expected of those who teach by speaking or writing, by being a testimony, is that they be rigorously coherent so as not to lose themselves in the enormous distance between what they do and what they say.”³⁵

To reiterate our point, the pedagogical duty of the intelligentsia includes: (a) the teaching and disseminating of enlightened thought to the general public with the primary aim of generating social emancipation through critical thinking and a sense of responsibility towards one’s social existence ; (b) the (re)learning of the intelligentsia, which must go beyond the common idea of being updated (as in certain idea of sabbatical leave might suggest) but a constant and persistent questioning and unmasking of the current problems and issues of the time. This means an intelligentsia who initiates to learn, relearn and unlearn. As Freire aptly

³⁵ Freire, *Letters to Christina*, pp.2- 3.

reminded, one cannot teach unless one begins to learn, in as much as an effective learning entails some form teaching ; and (c) upon recognizing the pedagogical duty, the next question will be how the intelligentsia approach the teaching and disseminating the message or direction for critical consciousness, without taking a paternalistic posture. In this regards, a democratic educational approach, whereby problem-posing pedagogy, is being made central in teaching/learning, may offer a solution. In the final analysis, this pedagogical duty remains an ethical-moral ones in which the obligation to fulfill it could never be compromised. The failure of the intelligentsia to undertake this task will be very costly to the society concerned.

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