

Confessions of "A Weaver of Words"

A Sample Column for Review

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(Slightly Modified February 22, 2004 and August 11, 2010)

One day while dissecting the appendix of *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* I came across this:

A number of metaphorical expressions would appear to be creations of ancient, even Indo-European date.

Most interesting are the cases where from two or more traditions (usually including Homer and the *Rig-Veda*) it is possible to reconstruct a poetic phrase consisting of two members. Such are the expressions “imperishable fame” ... “strong (and holy) mind” ... and the “weaver (or crafter) of words,” the Indo-European poet himself.

Smaller than the elephant, weaker than the lion, and less industrious than the ant, *Homo sapiens* has nonetheless become the most dominant single species on the planet, primarily because we can think for ourselves and then communicate those thoughts to others.

Speech evolved with *Homo erectus*; most civilizations arose with the written word; the Renaissance and Enlightenment were moved by movable type; and our Information Age is driven by our omnipresent, if not omniscient, mass

media—in print, on-line, and over the airwaves: The power of those who influence thought—the descendants of the ancient “weavers of words”—has never been greater, for better and worse.

It is my right to write but also my responsibility to do so with regard for the tangible consequences of my intangible words. *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* incited a nation to emancipate millions of slaves; *Mein Kampf* incited a nation to exterminate millions of Jews.

Media itself is but a means to an end. Content is king.

When researching and writing a work on comparative religions, I was moved to find a common thread woven throughout human cultures, down through time and around the world—a world all too often violently divided by our differing beliefs. However, this unifying faith was not what I was taught and I believe as a (very liberal-minded) Roman Catholic—that “God is love” and that love, in all forms, is the meaning of life. Love is indeed a recurring theme amongst the religions of the world but not always a primary concern.

No, the most deep-seated belief of humankind seems to be our faith in a universal spirit of

truth (or the source of truth or reality)—the spirit worshipped by Jews as Yahweh (“I am (that I am)”), by Christians as God, by Muslims as Allah, by Parsees and other Zoroastrians as Ohrmazd, by Baha’is as God, by Hindus as Brahman, by Buddhists as ? (a concept beyond all human understanding) , by Sikhs as ik Om Kar (the one Creator), by traditional Confucianists as the supreme moral authority, by Taoists as the Tao (the Supreme Principle of reality), and by Japanese Shintoists as Kami (Sacred Power).

As a matter of logic, not faith, it would be self-defeating to deny the existence of truth, for to do so would be to assert as the truth that there is no truth.

Overall, for human beings there is nothing more sacred than the truth. And thus, nothing more profane than a lie or more reckless than a misstatement of fact. Therein lies the awesome responsibility for anyone who would think a thought, utter a word, or write a tad or a tome.

Facing the truth, I recognize that some things are within my control and others, beyond—we’re neither completely “masters of our own fate” nor simply “dust in the wind.” I therefore humbly pray and promise to live up to my motto, “Do your best, and hope (and pray) for the rest” (as well as my epitaph, “His best he did carry on, until he was carrion!”).

Hoping to do more good than harm, I remain your faithful servant, a “weaver of words.”