

Sex, Age, and Caste: The Grandest Narratives of All

By Larry TAUB

In a recent WFSF e-list discussion, Ted FULLER asked, "What are the real drivers of history?" My answer was – not technology, not economics, money, or business, and not religion or ideology - but the changes in paradigms from one historical period to the next, as the human spirit matures through history and into the future.

A book of mine, *The Spiritual Imperative: Sex, Age, and the Last Caste*, attempts to explain how these paradigms change, by means of three historical grand narratives (macrohistories) that represent history's deepest structures. I call these macrohistories: the Age Model, the Sex Model, and the Caste Model.

Before summarizing the book, I feel it is important to explain why I wrote it.

Time and the Human Condition

COPERNICUS and GALILEO'S sun-centred model of the solar system gave us our view of space. NEWTON and EINSTEIN'S mechanical and electromagnetic models gave us our view of nature. The three macrohistorical models of history and the future in this book give us, I believe, our view of time and the human condition: they make up a theory that explains how history evolves, and foresees what the basic future trends will be.

So they are crucial, I feel, to our collective well-being, perhaps survival. Since no one else seems either to have noticed them or seen their implications thoroughly, probably because they have their sources in Eastern and pre-modern culture rather than in the heads of modern Western thinkers, I feel the need to share them with you and the wider public. This is the book's main purpose.

But the book has important sub-purposes. The Sex and Caste Models especially help us anticipate key emerging futures. They also help change our conventional view of history and the future.

People often believe that "history is just one damn thing after another," as someone said – that is, chaotic, random, directionless, and meaningless – that the future is completely unpredictable, and that unexpected events and trends are actually unexpected. The models show, I feel, that history has order, sense, direction, and meaning – if it is not actually programmed – and help us expect the unexpected. They show that, though everyday events are unpredictable, the future's broad directions, including the "unexpected" ones, are foreseeable.

Another sub-purpose of the book is to present a comprehensive picture of the history-future complex that really is one. Historians, futurists, and others have written excellent books and articles that present parts of the big picture in great depth. For instance, they have revealed to us the rise of China and India, the shift of world political and economic power to Asia, the effects of globalization and global warming, the possibilities of sustainable development, the compatibility of Islam and liberal democracy, the coming Spiritual Age, spiritual trends in business, politics, and the economy, the future wonders of technology, the rising role of women, the rise of the right brain, and much more.

But we need more synthesis. These three macrohistories are intended to provide it – to give a total framework in which all the above trends have their place, and which shows how they interrelate and affect each other.

An Indispensable Theory

I mention these purposes because I would like the reader to consider above all what I feel is the book's value as an indispensable theory and contribution to human understanding, peace, and survival – despite parts of it which some readers may not agree with.

Let's look at DARWIN'S theory to see what I mean. A certain Alexander wrote recently in the Bangkok Post (I think): "Of course the DARWIN theory [of evolution] is not completely provable, as the Pope seems to ask before he will succumb. Neither is the theory of special relativity. The DARWIN'S theory will only be proven 100% if we find fossils of every existing species at every stage of ...evolution. This is hardly possible. But a theory does not need to be proven 100%. It is a

model that lasts as long as there is no counter-proof.... The DARWIN'S theory is at the moment the most viable instrument to explain the differentiation among the species. If counter-proofs arise (and they have not so far) the theory will have to be changed or abandoned, like so many other models which have been abandoned in the history of science."

Since the models, I feel, form "the most viable instrument to explain" history and get a handle on the future, and we need such an instrument at this exceedingly dangerous time in human history, and counter-proofs to the models do not seem to have yet reared their heads, I ask readers, despite any reservations they may have, to read the book and treat the models in the same scientific spirit in which I offer them.

The summary of the book. Firstly, form: the book has eighteen chapters, divided into four parts. Part One explains the basics of the three models, discusses the main directions that the Sex and Age Models "say" are likely to happen in the future, and explains how the models are connected to each other. The rest of the book focuses on the Caste Model as the central axis, with the Sex and Age Models revolving around it.

Part Two explains what the past three caste ages (Spiritual-Religious Age No. 1, Warrior, and Merchant Ages) and the present Worker Age are/were all about.

Parts Three and Four, the book's second half, deal entirely with the future. Part Three foresees the most probable scenarios that will play out in the near future, the peak (final) stage of the Worker Age (until about the years 2030 – 2040), while Part Four outlines the likely scenarios of the distant future, mainly the second half of this century (the Second Spiritual-Religious Age).

Age and Sex

The book's content. The Age Model is based on the old idea that history evolves through stages of spiritual development that parallel the stages (the life cycle) of a single individual. That is, human history began with an Age of Birth, followed by an Age of Infancy, an Age of Early Childhood, etc. According to this model, though individual people, countries, or cultures may be "older" or "younger", the "average" spiritual/maturity level of the human race as a whole is about 19 years old.

Like those of the other two models, the core idea of the Age Model is not new. Its origins are not known (please correct me if I am wrong). But PASCAL is said to have stated it back in the 17th century. The evolution theorist Ernst HAECKEL'S "ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny" is a biological version of it. FREUD refers to it in *Totem and Taboo*, and it is the underlying premise for Ken WILBER'S thought and works.

The Age Model is a simple statement of this idea, which divides history into six or seven easily explainable developmental stages, and answers at least two major questions about the future: How will religion evolve and what are the chances of the human race surviving its self-destructive urge?

The Sex Model (you could call it the "feminist" model, though it is based on key concepts of Chinese philosophy) divides history and the future into three ages of human "sexual" development. The first was the Yin Age of the basically prehistoric past, when humanity lived according to the female principle. The second was the Yang Age, covering most of recorded history until virtually today, when humanity shifted over to a world view in tune with the male principle.

The third age is the Androgynous Age. Although its beginnings date back some 50 years, it is the future, when humanity recaptures key lost "female" elements that the Yang Age repressed or "forgot" to achieve a balance between the female and male principles.

This Sex Model is clearly dialectical: a Yin Age (thesis); followed by its opposite, a Yang Age (antithesis); ending in an Androgynous Age (synthesis of yin and yang). Like the other two models of the book, it dates back to 1975.

Different versions of the model's core idea have appeared in the past. The first I am aware of is that of Shulamith FIRESTONE, co-founder of the radical feminist movement. Her version appears as a chart at the end of her classic work, *The Dialectic of Sex* (1970). She uses this chart to foresee how the resurgence of feminism is likely to affect the future in a very positive way. Like the Sex Model, her version is dialectical, and the two are in agreement.

The second version I know of is that of Amaury DE RIENCOURT, in his book, *Sex and Power in History* (1974). I would call it an anti-feminist version of the Sex Model's core idea, said to be written as an alarmed reaction to the rise of women and the growing influence of feminism. I

consider his narration of the past, the Yin Age and the Yang Age, excellent, but the Sex Model disagrees with his view of the future: He sees the future, third age, not as an Androgynous Age, but as a Yin Age, a return to the female principle. So he sees history as fluctuating – from yin to yang, then back to yin, then back to yang, endlessly perhaps – rather than as a dialectical process. And so in his third age, women “take over” and create more human havoc than what male-supremacy did during the Yang Age. That might be true if it were to occur, but I doubt it will.

More recently (1987), our WFSF colleague, Riane EISLER, published her amazing *The Chalice and the Blade*, which also has a core idea like that of the Sex Model. Her macrohistory calls the Yin Age the Partnership Society, and the following Yang Age that “overthrew” it the male-dominated Dominator Society, covering all of recorded history until now. EISLER is an activist working to bring about the “third age,” the Partnership Society, when the female principle will return to prominence.

DE RIENCOURT’S and EISLER’S models seem to resemble each other in depicting the past – the first two ages – and in seeing history as a fluctuation (from yin to yang and back to yin) rather than as a dialectic. In that they differ from FIRESTONE’S model and the Sex Model. But they come to completely opposite conclusions about the future: DE RIENCOURT sees the future resurgence of the female principle as a menace to humanity, while EISLER, like FIRESTONE and the Sex Model, sees it as the only way to prevent the human race from destroying itself.

My lone criticism of EISLER’S model is that she seems to see the male principle as all bad, to be discarded in the future Partnership Society, and the female principle as all good, and so hopefully the dominant, if not sole, principle of that coming age. I thus get the impression that she envisions the New Age not as an Androgynous Age, with the male and female principles in balance and equally important, but as a purely Yin Age. A society that totally suppresses the yang, the male principle, I feel, far from being a Partnership Society, could steer us toward a totalitarian matriarchy, another Dominator Society, but ruled by “Jewish mothers” instead of “Jewish fathers” (patriarchs).

The Sex Model foresees a wide-ranging future scenario, connected with holism, animal rights, synthetic thinking, ecology and environmental issues, class structure and male supremacy, networking, the meeting of the twain of East and West, gay issues, and a new sense of time, neither linear nor cyclical. Perhaps most important of all, it foresees the coming predominant role of women in politics and business and a merger of traditional male and female sexuality and styles of love and intimacy.

History as a History of Caste Struggle

The Caste Model is based on, but is different from, the Hindu philosophy of history and caste. Like that Hindu core idea, the Model classifies people into four broad, generic types, or “varnas,” a word that literally means “colour” but usually translates into English as “caste.” The four castes are (1) the brahmans, let’s call them “seekers,” or religious- or spiritually-oriented people; (2) the kshatriya, the warriors; (3) the vaishva, the merchants; and (4) the shudra, the workers.

Every individual has features of all four castes, but the features of one predominate. That is the caste the individual “belongs” to.

The history part of the core Hindu idea says that the four castes take turns “ruling” the world, in the above order. The Caste Model adopts this basic core idea of caste and history, saying that history starts out, therefore, with a Spiritual-Religious Age, followed by a Warrior Age, then a Merchant Age, then a Worker Age, then sort of reverts to a second Spiritual-Religious Age, which is the end of human history, so to speak, and the beginning of a post-human or superhuman stage, which is humanity evolved into a higher species.

For convenience, the Caste Model calls the first spiritual-religious age Spiritual-Religious Age No. 1, the transition from animal proper to human, and the second, end-of-history one, as Spiritual-Religious Age No. 2.

According to the Caste Model, this switching from age to age happens because each caste takes power from the preceding one through “caste struggle.” Here is where the Marxist macrohistory is a little off: history evolves, not through “class struggle,” but through “caste struggle.”

Defining “caste” is a little hard. Let’s say, simply, that it is a group with common socio-economic roles, goals, and worldview – a particular standpoint on the meaning and purpose of life. The phrase “rules the world” needs defining as well. Simply, during the Age that a particular caste “rules the world,” it means, first, that the leading, most powerful members of the ruling caste are the

world's main ruling elite. For example, during the Warrior Age, the ancient and medieval worlds, the ruling elite were the kings, emperors, top generals, nobility. During the Merchant Age, it was the top business people, entrepreneurs, financiers, and industrialists.

Second, a caste "rules the world" in the Age when its value system and worldview are the dominant ones in the world. For instance: fighting, weapons, machismo, and heroism during the Warrior Age; money and possessions during the Merchant Age (17th to 20th centuries); work, company, and professional and managerial skills during the Worker Age (20th century, now and for the next 30 years).

Third, a caste "rules the world" during the Age when its tools, skills, acts, organizations, and institutions are the ones that most develop and flourish.

A close look at history also shows various age patterns. One is that each age has at least three distinct stages. The first is the *pioneering* stage, when the caste is getting organised to resist the "oppression" of the previous caste in power. That "pioneering," rising caste does not rule anywhere yet.

The second stage is the *revolutionary-evolutionary* stage. The rising caste takes power through revolution, usually violent. These revolutions almost always break out in countries and regions far from the "great powers" (the First World) from where the ruling caste rules. Yet, at the same time the rising caste evolves, non-violently, to power even in those latter "first world" countries.

And the third is the rising caste's *peak* stage, when it actually rules the world and becomes the First World – and is ripe for falling, to be replaced by the next caste in line.

This leads to three important conclusions. (1) Since the castes are in struggle, the ages overlap. Example: The 20th century was the peak stage of the Merchant Age, the revolutionary-evolutionary stage of the Worker Age, and the pioneering stage of the now-rising spiritual-religious caste. (2) The ages get shorter and shorter. (3) The Caste Model explains why great powers rose and fell in the past and foresees which countries, cultures, and regions will rise and fall in the future.

Outcastes and Cycles

People make three invalid "knee-jerk" assumptions when they encounter the Caste Model. The first is that the Caste Model and the Hindu core idea, the Hindu philosophy of the castes and the ages on which it is based, are identical. The second is that the Caste Model has something to do with India's CASTE SYSTEM, and so they always ask where the outcastes fit into the Model. And, the third is that the Caste Model is a CYCLICAL view of history.

The Caste Model and the Hindu core idea are quite different. The Hindu idea is part of Hindu religion, and so comes in a package containing all kinds of religious beliefs. These include beliefs that not only differ from sect to sect, but also reflect questionable class, caste, and sex biases, and do not accord with history as we understand it. For instance, one version of the core idea says that a Satyayuga (a Spiritual-Religious Age) lasts for 1,728,000 years! A figure, obviously, drawn out of the blue. Another common related religious belief says that whenever a new cycle of four ages (a *mahayuga*) starts the God Vishnu returns to Earth in a new incarnation.

Whatever symbolic, mythic, and religious value these beliefs have, they are not believable in a way that can be applied to clarify history as we know it and to forecast concrete future trends.

But when stripped down to its bare bones, the Hindu core idea does shed light on actual history, and gives common-sense hints about broad trends to come. So, the Caste Model ignores most of the "religious features," the exaggerated time assertions, and the class, caste, and sex prejudices of the original, and simply looks at its barest essentials of caste and ages, and translates them into the language of everyday history as we understand it.

Second, the original Hindu core philosophy has little to do with the Indian caste system, although the caste system leans on that philosophy for its authority. The religious and warrior caste elite of ancient India legitimized its caste system on this ancient Hindu wisdom about the universal castes in the same way that the religious and warrior elites of Christendom built and legitimized their church and social power on the wisdom of Jesus.

Or maybe the ancient Hindu sages devised the caste philosophy by observing the caste social order of their time. Either way, the Hindu philosophy and the Caste Model based on it are no more identical with the caste system than the Church is identical with the wisdom of the great rabbi, Jesus.

And so, the outcastes, though their status is an abusive outgrowth of the CASTE SYSTEM, have nothing to do with either the Caste Model or the core philosophy it derives from. As the word "outcaste" implies, the outcastes are OUTSIDE the philosophy by definition.

Third, the Caste Model is not a cyclical view of history. When people say that a macrohistory is cyclical, they usually mean, I believe, that it sees history repeating itself endlessly, with no beginning or end, and that everything that happens will happen again in the "next cycle." This implies that history has no real meaning or direction. Because what is the sense of our acting to improve the world if, in the next cycle, both that same world situation and our action to improve it will reoccur endlessly, and in all future cycles to infinity.

This cyclical view is like the movie, *Groundhog Day*, where the same events recur daily, starting every morning, and Bill MURRAY, the protagonist, goes through the same experiences day after day, driving him "up the wall" with frustration.

This cyclical view of time is a feature of the Hindu core idea. Only, instead of history being a single, human "groundhog" day, it's a "groundhog day" in the life of Brahma, lasting billions of human years.

The Caste Model is not cyclical in this way. It is a non-linear spiral with both linear and cyclical features. Think of a typical spiral like the Periodic Table of Chemical Elements. In the Periodic Table, the chemical elements are arranged **linearly** by their atomic numbers (the number of protons in the nuclei of their atoms). The arrangement is linear because the atomic numbers go in a "straight line" from the lowest to the highest, that is, from 1, hydrogen, to 105, dubnium, or higher.

But the elements are also arranged **cyclically**, in periodic horizontal rows, one above the other, showing that all the elements in a Group, or vertical column, have "recurring" properties in common that make them related in character. The combined effect is a **spiral**. That is, every element in a Group is at a higher level than all the elements from the preceding periods in that Group, in the sense of being more complex.

But, and this is important, every element is unique and never repeated, and their number is finite, not without a beginning, endless, and infinite.

The Caste Model is the same. According to it, no events ever recur, and history never repeats. Like the so-called (misnamed?) Life Cycle, where no person ever repeats a stage of their life – neither infancy, childhood, teenage, middle age, or old age (once you are old, you will never be young again, except in spirit) – the Caste Model sees all of human history as a single cycle. It has a beginning, Spiritual Age No. 1, the transition between animal proper and human, and an end, Spiritual Age No. 2, the future transition between human and superhuman, the next stage of evolution.

The Future: Religion vs. Spirituality

What does the Caste Model say is likely to happen in the future? First, the Near Future: what is left of the present peak stage of the Worker Age – until about 2030 or 2040. The main focus continues to be on worker-caste values: identification with one's work, job company, and professional skill.

So the leading, industrialized, countries continue to focus on "things": science and technology, business and economics, manufactured goods, energy and natural resources, and related services, such as finance, communications, transportation, space exploration, government, conventional health and education, and organised and disorganised crime. Economic determinism, whether Marxist, capitalist, "left" or "right," remains a key part of the dominant worldview.

Politically, the Caste Model foresees two grand trends based on this thing-orientation. One will be the continuing bundling together of all countries into blocs ("unions"), with the European Union as the model. The second will be that the North will still be more powerful than the South, but realigned into three new blocs.

The No. 1 of the three, so the world's leading power, will be what I call "Confucio." It will consist of Japan, China (and Taiwan), and Korea (North and South Korea reunified).

The No. 2 world power will be "Europa": the EU expanded to include most of Europe. The No. 3 world power will be "Polario," a Union of the countries surrounding the North Pole, which will include the two "superpowers," the US and Russia, Canada, probably the five Scandinavian countries, and the ex-USSR European countries Ukraine, Belarus, Armenia, and Georgia.

Second, the Caste Model indicates the Distant Future. The present revolutionary-evolutionary stage of Spiritual-Religious Age No. 2 will continue. It overlaps, of course, with the above "near-future" peak stage of the Worker Age, extends beyond it to the middle of this century, and is then followed by that Spiritual-Religious Age's peak stage, at the end of the century and beyond.

During this Spiritual-Religious Age's revolutionary-evolutionary stage, main world power will shift from the industrialized North (Confucio, Europa, and Polario) to the "Religious Belt," that central region stretching westward from Tibet and Bangladesh, across India, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan, Islamic central Asia, the Arab countries, Turkey, and Israel, across North Africa to Morocco.

The Belt will probably divide up into four bloc-unions, which I call, from west to east, the Bharati, or South Asian, Federation, the Central Asian Islamic Federation (Iran, Turkey, the "Stan" countries, including Afghanistan), the Pan-Semitic Federation (Israel, Palestine, and the Arab countries), and the Maghreb Federation of North Africa.

As part of these Federations' rise to power, Islamic, Indian, and Jewish fundamentalism will play a somewhat violent revolutionary role, but eventually these countries' fundamentalist tendencies will metamorphose to a high level of spirituality. The increasing influential role women will play in fundamentalist movements, and the ongoing struggle against particularly Islamic terrorism in Islamic, Western, and other countries (China, Russia, India, Thailand, the Philippines), will be key promoters of this shift from religion to spirituality.

As parallel examples earlier in history, remember how the terrorist fundamentalisms of the Jacobins after the French Revolution (Merchant Age) and of the Bolsheviks, Maoists, and Khmer Rouge after their communist revolutions (Worker Age), were replaced by "sweeter", less oppressive systems.

Though these Federations will lead the world politically and economically, their main source of power will be spiritual.

Finally, the peak stage of this age will see a shift of power and influence from this Religious Belt to the world's indigenous cultures, especially in Africa, but also in the Americas, the Anzac countries, Asia, and the Pacific.

I realise that the forecasts of the above four paragraphs, in the spirit of futurist Jim DATOR, sound especially "ridiculous," but the why and how of all this is detailed in the book, and may help make the ridiculous slightly believable.

Meeting SARKAR

Aside from the Hindu philosophy of castes and ages itself, from which the Caste Model derives, two other macrohistories that resemble the Caste Model are those of HEGEL and, surprisingly perhaps, MARX. Though MARX'S past stages of history, on which he bases the proletariat's overthrow of capitalism, resemble the past stages of the Caste Model, his view of the future stages differs. He sees the worker caste and the Worker Age playing the key "heroic" future role, whereas the Caste Model, closer to HEGEL, sees the human race climaxing in a Spiritual Age. The basic differences between the Caste Model and MARX'S grand historical narrative are detailed in the book's Introduction.

What most likely will pop into your heads as resembling the Caste Model will be the macrohistory of P. R. SARKAR.

You may have read the excellent critique of *The Spiritual Imperative* by Takuya MURATA in the May 2007 edition of *Futures*. In it, MURATA notes many differences and similarities between P.R. SARKAR'S macrohistory and the Caste Model. As he writes, both "derive from Indian philosophy," both "are based on the concept that a dominant feature characterises each Age," and both "ascribe the cause that makes one Age pass to the next to the disintegration of the age itself rather than an external force."

The key difference he notes is that, in SARKAR'S model, the Ages move in a cycle that continues endlessly through human history – humans pass through many Intellectual, Warrior, and Merchant ages. That is, SARKAR'S is truly a cyclical model, while the Caste Model says that human history makes up only one cycle: it is a spiral that combines a linear and cyclical element, as explained earlier.

Here are a few more differences between the SARKAR and Caste Models. While both models include Warrior and Merchant Ages, SARKAR does not include a Worker Age; he sees no age in which the

worker caste exercises actual power. The worker caste basically serves as a pawn for his other three castes. He therefore sees only three ages per cycle, not four, as the Caste Model does. Second, since SARKAR'S model doesn't recognise a spiritual-religious caste, it does not include spiritual-religious ages either, as the Caste Model does. Instead, SARKAR posits an intellectual caste that rules Intellectual Ages, a caste that rules through "head knowledge" rather than through a religious, spiritual, or wisdom orientation.

The third difference, therefore, is that while the Caste Model sticks for its source to the generic, everyday, popular version of the Hindu theory of castes and ages, with four traditionally-recognized castes and ages, SARKAR developed his own unique, original version, with only three castes ruling instead of four, one of which is an intellectual rather than a spiritual-religious caste.

Why the differences?

I was lucky enough to actually meet P.R. SARKAR, back in 1966, while I was in India for a two-year stay. Mr. SARKAR wore many hats – spiritual guide, social movement leader and activist, thinker-philosopher, tantric teacher – and was impressive in all of them. His followers included people of all ranks and many castes all over India, and I was privileged to be at the train station when the organization's first member to be sent abroad left for Nairobi to set up a centre to make SARKAR'S teachings available beyond India.

I spent several weeks at SARKAR'S main ashram in Jamalpur on the Ganges, in Bihar State, where SARKAR was regularly in attendance. My purpose in being in Jamalpur was to learn tantric practice and SARKAR'S social, economic, and religious ideas underpinning them.

But for some reason Mr. SARKAR'S macrohistorical theory, the Proutist theory of history, was not included in my courses. I learned about it much later, in 1980, from the Australian Proutist magazine, *Dharma*. That was five years after I "discovered" the three models, which derived from another Indian source.

After leaving Jamalpur I visited Varanasi (Benares). In my eagerness to soak up as much Hindu and Buddhist lore as possible, I attended a lecture at the local Brahma Kumari Center. It was from that speaker that I first heard a presentation of the traditional, generic, version of the Hindu theory of the castes and ages, with all the religious mythology and accoutrements attached.

The ideas of the lecturer did not have much of an impact on me. As a student of history as conventionally presented, they struck me as curious nonsense, with little relation to "real" history. The only reason they stuck in my mind over the next nine years was because I often came across them in many contexts.

But one day, in 1975, in Tokyo, I read in the *Japan Times* how the North Vietnamese had completed their takeover of Saigon the previous day. The insight suddenly hit me: The worker caste was taking over worldwide from the merchant caste. I realised that the traditional Hindu theory of castes and ages actually contained a rough macrohistorical description of how history developed, stage-by-stage, and what the basic directions of the future were likely to be.

When I came across SARKAR'S version of that idea five years later, it struck me as too divergent from the traditional version to be as valuable to me for describing history and foreseeing the future as that generic version. Though, based on my experience with macrohistorical thinking during those intervening five years, I could imagine that SARKAR'S unique and original version could serve as an insight into history and the future for someone else – or myself at a later date.

Vipra or Sadvipra?

SARKAR'S Proutist theory overlaps – and reinforces – the Caste Model on at least two key points. First, like the Caste Model, the Proutist theory is rational-scientific rather than mythic-religious in tone. Though, likewise derived from the Hindu core idea, it discards its mythic religious accoutrements; it speaks to the modern-scientific Western(ised) worldview most of us, including futurists, share. SARKAR, the Indian "guru" and tantric, was also a modern Western thinker. His use of the Hindu core idea as the basis for his rational-scientific theory thus validates the Caste Model's similar use of it.

Second, though the Proutist macrohistory is basically cyclical, with history endlessly repeating itself, it has at least one feature that lets you see human history as a single, non-repetitive cycle, as the Caste Model does. That is, though SARKAR sees world power in the future reverting to the intellectual caste (the *vipra*), he says it is possible that the intellectuals who take over worldwide

will be *sadvipra* (spiritually evolved intellectuals). These seem to resemble the Caste Model's future spiritual-religious caste.

The big difference is: SARKAR sees the future influence of the *sadvipra* as possible, whereas the Caste Model sees the equivalent coming Spiritual-Religious Age as almost inevitable. But this coincidence of foresight seems to put the Proutist theory and the Caste Model in the same ballpark.

Foresight in Hindsight

Regarding foresight, I do not know whether SARKAR or Proutists have applied the Proutist theory to explain history convincingly in great detail and to make forecasts that have materialised, as I have done with the Caste Model. I have got to look deeper into Proutism, and beg to be informed further by Proutist cognoscenti. But since 1975, many trends/directions that the Caste Model indicated would likely happen have happened.

Here are a few from a slew that I consider significant. First I mention general forecasts, then those that materialised in the different world regions, though mainly in the Northern Hemisphere. Those in the South have yet to happen, assuming they will.

General:

- (1) The most notable has been the rise of feminism as, I would say, the world's most important political movement.
- (2) Connected with this, the increasing rise of women to world political and business leadership. For example, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, only three women served as elected heads of state, two of them because of family connections: Indira GANDHI, Mme. BANDARANAIKE, and Golda MEIR. The number of women top elected officials since then, including in the three most populous Islamic Asian countries, is too numerous to count, and, last but not least, even the US almost went in that direction.
- (3) The increasing similarity in male and female sexual styles, i.e., women behaving sexually like men and vice versa, although not completely forsaking their traditional styles.
- (4) The growing role of non-religious spirituality in politics, business, and other spheres.
- (5) The absence of war between the industrialized countries, but widespread war in the Third World and between Third World and First World countries.
- (6) Direct First World imperialism has ended, but it is still practiced in the Third World. Think China's holding on to Tibet, Indonesia's takeovers of West Papua and East Timor, and Saddam HUSSEIN'S attempt to absorb Kuwait.
- (7) The tendency of all countries to bunch up into blocs or unions, like the EU, ASEAN, NAFTA, Mercosur.

Europe:

- (1) The reunification of Germany.
- (2) The split-off of Eastern Europe from the USSR Empire.
- (3) The spread of the European Union to include most of Eastern Europe, but not Russia and adjacent countries that used to be in the USSR.
- (4) The end of the Cold War and friendlier relations between the US and Western Europe on one side and Russia on the other.
- (5) The resurgence of classic anti-Semitism in Europe and the West in general, often disguised as criticism of Israel and anti-Zionism, and often spearheaded by anti-Zionist Jews and Israelis.

The Far East and Africa:

- (1) Japan-US trade friction.
- (2) The rise of China as a world economic power.
- (3) Rapprochement between China, Japan, and South Korea.
- (4) Rapprochement between China and Taiwan.
- (5) Return of Japan spiritually to Asia.
- (6) Entry of Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and Burma to the Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN).
- (7) The shifting of world power to East Asia.
- (9) The ending of apartheid in South Africa.

The Middle East:

- (1) Peace between Israel and key Arab countries: Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Mauretania.
- (2) Peace negotiations and strivings between Israel and Palestine
- (3) The emergence of a Palestinian state.

The Religious Belt and elsewhere:

- (1) Violent religious revolutions in the Religious Belt.
- (2) At the same time, the political rise of fundamentalist religious groups in that area, as well as in other world regions: US, the Far East, Africa, South America.

These are not isolated trends. It was possible to foresee them, I feel, only because they seem simply to be "stepping stones" to the longer range forecasts that the models foresee, summarised earlier.

Macrohistory: A Futures Studies Methodology That Demands an Androgynous Methodist

Whether or not models can be used successfully to foresee the most likely scenarios depends, I feel, on how you use them. Here is where the personal gets political.

People often scoff at models and macrohistories, deriding them as "grand theories of history." They say, "if the categories of your 'grand theory' are broad and vague enough, you can read anything into them. You can interpret them to explain history in any number of ways and 'predict' anything you want. Pick and choose from history the facts that fit your theory, ignore those that don't, and claim that it 'predicted' anything that happened. Base the wildest, most absurd, future scenarios on them. And two people using the same 'grand theory' can come up with completely opposite scenarios."

And the scoffers point to many "grand theories," such as the Marxist one, whose forecasts were clear and concrete, but wrong.

The criticisms are true, but miss the point. And that is the point. First of all, the criticisms exaggerate and tarnish all grand narratives/macrohistories with the same brush. Grand narratives vary in explanation and forecast value. Some have a ring of truth, clarity in explanation, and enlightenment and foresight value that others do not. Think of Ken WILBER, Ibn KHALDUN, and EISLER.

And I think you will agree that the forecasts listed above, that have already come to be, show that the Sex, Age, and Caste Models have forecast value, hinting that the models' forecasts yet to materialise should not be easily dismissed, no matter how ridiculous or weird they may seem from today's vantage point.

True, different people can interpret the same model/macrohistory - including these three models - to come up with different, even opposite, future scenarios. For example, I interpret the already-started future Spiritual-Religious Age of the Caste Model so as to foresee humanity moving from "old-time religion" to a high level of spirituality - dangerous and possibly catastrophic in the beginning, but heading towards greater enlightenment and wisdom, a *sadvipra* age.

Another person might interpret that coming age as a time of endless gloom: a sinking into the swamp of religion in its most reactionary, totalitarian form: self-destruction, overpopulation, and the eventual end of the human race.

But to dismiss the models because they lend themselves to different possible future scenarios betrays a male-biased, yang-tinted view of what models and grand narratives are all about.

People have universally tended to view grand historical models as "laws of history," similar to the laws of physics and other natural sciences. Combine two chemicals in a certain way and you will get the same predictable result, no matter who does the combining. The process is analytical, impersonal, objective, and automatic - all traits of the male principle (as defined in Chapter Two of the book).

But history is more chaotic, in the technical sense. So you can not use grand historical models in the same, male, "law-of-history" way. Valid models give the big picture, in greater or lesser detail. To forecast the particular most likely scenarios with them, the person doing the forecasting is as important as the model itself. The process depends 50% on the model, the "male law" itself, and on

a reasonable "male head knowledge" of history and the different human cultures, and 50% on the "female" intuitive powers of the user, based on his or her own uniquely personal experience, empathy for the different human cultures, past and present, wisdom, and all those other uniquely personal subjective intangibles.

In other words, to forecast with models you have to operate "androgynously," in a sexually-balanced way. The model user, woman or man, has to have both male and female sides of their personality reasonably developed. (Maybe balance of right brain and left brain is another valid metaphor for this.) Without the androgynous balance the model-user's forecasts will be wild, weird, and/or quirky in either a hyper-male or hyper-female (hyper left-brain or hyper right-brain) way.

I don not claim that I, as the models' main interpreter, have achieved that balance, but since the book's forecasts have turned out as well as they have so far, I am encouraged to believe that at least I may be heading in that direction, despite the initial handicap of being born all male.

Publishing History and Availability

The Spiritual Imperative: Sex, Age, and the Last Caste is available in three languages - English, Spanish, and Japanese. Korean is on the way. The original English edition of 1995 was re-edited in 2002. This 2002 edition is available from Amazon.com (author's name: Lawrence TAUB). If you want an autographed copy from me directly, use PayPal from my website (<http://www.spiritualimperative.com> - then click Contact button) or email me (elitov@hotmail.com). Ordering through your local bookstore might mean a long wait.

The Spanish edition (*El Imperativo Espiritual: Sexo, Edad y la Ultima Caste*) came out early in 2008, and can be bought from its online publisher (<http://www.trafford.com/07-1491>) and from all online and terra-firma bookstores (Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Chapters, etc.) in several countries. Translated by Martha TRUJILLO of Bogota, Colombia.

The Japanese edition came out in December, 2007 in Tokyo, published by Japan's largest business-oriented publisher, Diamond Publishing. It has been a bestseller since it came out. So I may yet have some sort of decent income in my already-started old age. Japanese title: Mittsu no genri -- Sekksu, nenrei, shakai-kaiso ga mirai o tsuki-ugokasu. (The Three Principles: Sex, Age, and Caste Stir Up the Future).

The reason for the book's Japanese success is because both its publication and sales were shepherded through by Mr. Masanori KANDA, Japan's best-selling marketing maven, the Oprah WINFREY of the Japanese business world. Mr. KANDA saw something in the book I could never have imagined: its value as a guide to future market shifts.

And so, though the Japanese edition is listed in the categories of Society, Politics, and Sociology, it is known more widely as a business book. Translator: Ms. Yoshiko KANEKO. Mr. KANDA also wrote the Japanese Preface. Since reading it, I have been dying to meet myself.

Sarkar's Contribution to Macrohistory and Futures Imaginations

By Sohail INAYATULLAH

I enjoyed reading Larry TAUB'S essay *Sex, Age, and Caste: the grandest narrative of all*. I am quite sympathetic to his overall project particularly that of contextualizing trends in the broader patterns of macrohistory as well as in using theory to enlist support in creating a more gender partnership-oriented society.

I am also pleased that his work is gaining traction in Japan and elsewhere, and wish him the utmost success in his work as a futurist.

CLARIFICATIONS

I would, however, like to clarify the part of his work linked to SARKAR in general and to macrohistory in particular (1). First, I do have a problem with the construction of caste as "Hindu".

A historical reading is important. The caste structure developed with the Aryan invasion of India (2). The indigenous population, who generally followed Shiva and Tantric practices, were vanquished and became the lower caste. The Aryans imposed their structure of warrior, trader and priest on the local population and made them the workers, the shudras. Overtime, this structure became solidified in Indian society. While there remain some Indian thinkers who believe it gives some necessary discipline to a chaotic society, most would assert that it is the single most violent system in the world, thus the paradox of India - a civilization that places individual non-violence as primary, yet its deeper structure is foundational and systemically violent.

This is important to raise here as SARKAR'S work was not just focused on change in individual behaviour but social behaviour as well ... in the Indian context this was and continues to be the ending of caste.

Second, it is important to note that Hindu is a recent category, invented by Muslims (over a century plus ago) and now recently has gained legitimacy with the conservative right wing in India. Traditionally, as Ashis NANDY (3) has pointed out, there were endless gods and gurus vying for attraction, vying for loyalty – epistemological pluralism had been historically built into the psyche of Indian civilization. The conservative elements in Indian politics have sought to invent an institutionalized Hindu identity (one god, one people, one nation) as a wedge politics against other religions particularly Muslims. The genocide in Gujarat as Garda GHISTA (4) has written is one result of this strategy.

An alternative tack is that of seeing many eclectic traditions in Indian history, even as the overall project is similar. The overall project beginning with Tantra thousands of year ago to modernist India today remains: the understanding of the self as central; knowledge as additive not exclusionary; epistemology as pluralistic, instead of the division of wrong or right knowledge, generally a softer depth and shallow approach is taken; and inner bliss as the overall goal (eupsychia).

Third, TAUB argues that SARKAR'S four stage model is in fact a three stage model. SARKAR was very clear on this: the worker stage is a real and pivotal stage but it is short lived, not absent. Additionally, the theory of the social cycle is based on evolutionary theory informed by dynamic models of general systems theory. That is, the future to some extent remains open, humans have agency – the future is not a fixed railway. Thus, it could be as workers are more informed by the peer-to-peer revolution, as the skills revolution continues, and if we enter a post-capitalist system, the workers era may last longer. But generally, this force is more chaotic, revolutionary, seeing to redress imbalances, often and unfortunately in violent ways. After the workers era, the system undergoes a pendulum shift as the structure and order of the warrior episteme enters.

Fourth, this raises the issue of cyclicity and linearity. As Prout scholars have argued extensively elsewhere, SARKAR includes a cyclical dimension (the social cycle of the four ages, epistemes) and a linear dimension. This is his theory of evolution, which has three aspects: physical clash (or survival of the fittest, mutation), intellectual clash (memetic evolution, new ideas) and the attraction of the Great, or bliss. In this sense, bliss functions as a strange attractor guiding humanity forward. We can of course become personally and conceptually lost in the physical battle or intellectual battle but it is this move toward inner and outer bliss that brings in direction that is decisive in creating the future. Purpose is not lost in evolution. This bliss however does not – as in many religious views or via Hegel – enter the nation, it cannot be owned by any particular person or civilization. Indeed, as SARKAR has argued in his work on neo-humanism, it goes beyond humanism as well, to include plants and animals (5). And I have argued, neohumanism can and will most likely extend to include artificial intelligence as robots become more sentient (the rights of robots, if you will).

Fifth, the spiral emerges from the sadvipra. She/he is not just the pure intellectual but rather has managed to integrate and balance the different aspects of personality, i.e. knows how to serve others, can use ideas for the collective good, can use matter and ideas to create wealth and can protect others. By integrating these different paradigms of self, the sadvipra leader attempts to ensure that no one varna stays in power too long. He or she creates the appropriate transformative momentum to ensure that if the intellectuals are disowning money and the market, an economic paradigm shift is required; if the trader disowns the other, nature, gender, equity, then they bring on a social revolution. Using his or futurist and macrohistorical hat, the sadvipra leader keeps the cycle moving. This movement is not just to the next stage but it is to a synthetic advanced level

wherein there is more neohumanism (i.e. less nationalism, religiousism, etc.) toward bliss – the spiral. As well, the speed of the cycles can be increased (500 years of capitalism is enough!).

And this is crucial, the future cannot be precisely or accurately predicted – the universe is open and is being co-created even though there are evolutionary derived patterns of history that structure reality. Part of the role of the sadvipra is to facilitate, to be a hand-maiden for this new possible future.

Now what, as Ashis Nandy has warned us of, avoids the tyranny of the future, that is what ensures escape-ways built in to any theory of everything. These in my view are: first, the importance of spiritual practice in this endeavour ...that is, seeing the social cycle not just as an external reality but as part of the inner make up. That is to say, within one's politics of the self, which varna is dominant? Is my trader self dominant (negotiating value between sub-personalities), my worker (serve other selves), my warrior (protecting my other selves or ...). Second, comes from the tantric tradition – namely, what is, is not wrong or right but there are levels of reality. Third, there is no way anyone can be anointed a sadvipra ...it is a bottom-up, grassroots revolution – leaders are noticed by what they do, not what they say they do! Fourth, learning comes from doing, from experimenting.

I raise the fourth as I find macrohistory not just of interest because of its broad sweep of understanding but for its utility in organizational strategy. In over a hundred workshops, I have found that organizations can use SARKAR'S work to discern which varna or episteme is dominant. What do they need to do to transform? How can violence (physical, emotional and structural) be avoided? How can they create value oriented leaders who are balanced and dynamic? Peter HAYWARD and Joe VOROS' work is instructive. They have taken macrohistory and made it organizationally relevant via the SARKAR Game. In this game, individuals in an organization play out the different varnas and then analyze the role of each varna concluding with the centrality of foresight oriented situational leadership (knowing when to play which role)(6).

PURPOSE

The purpose for SARKAR was never to describe the world to be clever but to give resources for analysis so that the world could be changed, so that cycles could be transformed, so that individually and collectively more bliss could be realized. SARKAR'S theories of macrohistory, thus, I believe should be seen as new categories which expand on MARX'S class. They reframe past and potential futures. I would prefer not to get lost in the "prediction" game; rather, the purpose of macrohistory is to help us see new patterns, to frame questions and strategies, and most importantly to help create new futures. Within the predictive game, I find using many macrohistorians in an eclectic way can be quite powerful for scenario generation (i.e. the pendulum of SOROKIN with the linearity of SMITH with the spiral of SARKAR, for example). That said, there are a good number of books, particularly by Ravi BATRA, which use SARKAR to make bold forecasts (7). The most important aspect of these contributions is to use foresight to avoid certain default futures and instead choose more balanced blissful pathways. Accuracy of prediction does not prove a theory as other factors could explain correlation, including luck. Finally, theories themselves exist at different levels – macro (broad, through space and time), meso (organizational) and micro (day to day understandings).

As to TAUB'S last point the determined future, I am not sure if SARKAR believed a society of sadvipras was inevitable, but he remained positive all along foreseeing a world where communism, capitalism and religiousism would disappear. This foreseeing was based on understanding the factors of history but also on inspiring others to invent and create an alternative future. Inevitability as strategy is intelligible, inevitability as theory is hazardous since structure will then reign over agency.

Futures Studies, as I see it, even while understanding structure (patterns of macrohistory, trends, inner frameworks) transforms us by making agency attractive, not by giving hope (8) but by pointing us toward possibility, which then can become reality.

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- (1) I do this in the context of having authored two books on Sarkar (Understanding Sarkar: the indian episteme, macrohistory and transformative knowledge. Brill, Leiden, 2002; Situating Sarkar: tantra, macrohistory and alternative futures. Maleny, Gurukul, 1999) and edited two books on Sarkar/macrohistory (Macrohistory and Macrohistorians. Westport, Praeger, 1987, with Johan Galtung; Transcending Boundaries: Prabhat Rainjan Sarkar's Theories of Individual and Social Transformation. Maleny, Gurukul, 1999 with Jennifer Fitzgerald) as well articles in Futures, the Routledge Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophy, Development etc on Sarkar and his social movement, Prout. For more on prout, see, www.proutcollege.org, www.proutinstitute.org, www.priven.org/, www.worldproutassembly.org/
- (2) See Romila Thapar, A History of India. Baltimore, Penguin Books, 1966. See Rajni Kothari, Caste in Indian Politics. New Delhi, Orient Longman, 1970.
- (3) Ashis Nandy, Traditions, Tyrannies and Utopias. Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1987.
- (4) Garda Ghista, The Gujarat Genocide. Bloomington, Indiana, Authorhouse, 2006.
- (5) See Sohail Inayatullah, Marcus Bussey and Ivana Milojevic, eds., Neohumanist Educational Futures. Tamsui, Tamkang University, 2006.
- (6) See Peter Hayward and Joesph Voros, "Playing the neohumanist game, " in Neohumanist Educational Futures: Liberating the pedagogical intellect. Tamsui, Tamkang University, 2006, pages, 283-296.
- (7) See Ravi Batra, Muslim Civilization the Crisis in Iran. Dallas, Venus Books, 1980. Ravi Batra, The Downall of Capitalism and Communism. London, Macmillan, 1978. Ravi Batra, The Great Depression of 1990. New York, Bantam, 1988. Ravi Batra, The New Golden Age. London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. www.ravibatra.com
- (8) As John Cleese tells it in the movie Clockwork: Despair I can handle, it is hope I can't stand.