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EDUCATION, MYTHS AND THE FEMALE PRINCIPLE

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Abstract

In this paper, the metaphysical underpinning of our educational system, which is related to the physicalist paradigm in science, is contemplated. Consideration is also given as to how myths influence our understanding of nature, which, in turn affects how we perceive our world. It is suggested that some myths like that of Apollo killing the Python, went a step further than that of Eve eating of the tree of life and has influenced the way humans obtain information about Nature and the world in which we are submersed. It is argued that the myth of Apollo led to a systematic depreciation of the intuitive way of knowing, which is connected with the Female Principle, which in turn helped to give rise to the rational logical way of knowing which is related to the Male Principle. Like with Jung's anima and animus, it is claimed that both genders have the potential to consciously develop both ways of knowing. The Female Principle opens us to connect intuitively with our deeper Self, soul or the 'unconscious mastermind' via the heart so we can get guidance in our lives on personal issues or about any question that interests us. It also opens us to obtaining information about the wellbeing of other beings we care about through the conscious use of empathy, an emotional faculty. It is suggested here that training people how to consciously tap into their intuition via their heart, is vital for individual wellbeing as well as providing the key in how we can collectively learn to live on this planet in a more harmonious way. It is suggested that by recognizing the

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existence and importance of the Female Principle, we can collectively begin to work on a new educational system, which embraces not only the Male Principle but also includes the Female Principle.

Introduction

In this paper I look at the mythological roots of our educational system because, like Eliade (1998), I feel that if we are truly to become ecological beings, we need to correct the current myth, which is being supported and perpetuated by our educational system. As this myth also underlies the prevailing physicalist philosophy of science, we have created a system that keeps perpetuating itself, even though quantum physics is revealing there is another reality beyond the visible material world.

The scientific quest to understand nature and life is not new. Throughout the ages people have wanted to know more about their nature, Nature and the Universe in which they found them immersed. In India and probably many other places as well, these early inquirers sat down and took their question into their hearts, turned their attention inwards and waited for nature to give them an answer. They became known as rishis, seers, philosophers and yogis, and the knowledge they obtained was based on intuition. The Vedas of India are considered as sruti or Shruti (Lochtefeld, 2002, Arka, 2018), meaning it arose from information that was heard rather than smriti (Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, n.d.), information that was remembered.

Humans have also not only sought to understand nature though intuitive understanding, but, through the "power of abstraction", they have transformed "the data of experience into symbols" (Reno, 1997, p. 77). On the one hand this has given rise to the use of words and the naming of entities, and on the other hand, it has also given rise to myths, or stories that explain why the world is the way it is. Maybe the power to abstract is one of the characteristics, which distinguishes humans from other animals. Through this power humans have been able to go "beyond natural events and objects, to conceptualize them and invest them with significance" (Reno, 1997, p. 77).

According to Campbell (2008) myths have four main functions:

- “The first is the mystical function... realizing what a wonder the universe is, and what a wonder you are, and experiencing awe before this mystery...”
- “The second is to present an image of the cosmos, an image of the universe round about, that will maintain and elicit this experience of awe. [or] ...to present an image of the cosmos that will maintain your sense of mystical awe and explain everything that you come into contact with in the universe around you . . .
- The third function of a mythological order is to validate and maintain a certain sociological system: a shared set of rights and wrongs, proprieties or improprieties, on which your particular social unit depends for its existence
- The fourth function of myth is psychological. That myth must carry the individual through the stages of his life, from birth through maturity through senility to death. The mythology must do so in accords with the social order of his group, the cosmos as understood by his group, and the monstrous mystery. (Campbell, 2008, pp. 6-10)

Education, whether it is formal or informal, is linked to the third function as it is about supporting and sustaining a certain social order. It is also connected with the fourth function as education involves psychological functioning and how the stages of life are determined. For these reasons, it is vital we understand the prevailing myth underlying modern Western society and which is being supported by our present educational system.

Here we are using myth as defined by Campbell and not in the Judeo-Christian sense of myth meaning something that is an “illusion” or false if it contradicts what is found in the Old and New Testament (Eliade, 1998).

Prevailing Myth

I suggest here that the prevailing myth underlying our present system goes far back to when Eve, tempted by the serpent, was said to eat from tree of life in the Garden of Eden. In mythology, the serpent, the moon, females and life itself are linked, as they all undergo transformation and change. “The power of life causes the snake to shed its skin, just as the moon sheds its shadow. The serpent sheds its skin to be born again, as the moon its shadow to be born again. They are equivalent symbols . . .they are image (s) of life. Life sheds one generation after another, to be born again. The serpent represents immortal energy and consciousness engaged in the field of time, constantly throwing off death and being born again”. (Campbell, 1991, p. 53). As women give birth to life in a temporal body, she is therefore a reminder of the fall of man from non-

dual timeless consciousness and therefore is associated with sin (Campbell 1991). But when we depreciate women as givers of life, by association we are also “depreciating life itself” (Lindhard 2018c in Lindhard, 2018, p.28).

Another myth in the same vein but which is much more aggressive, is the myth of Apollo arriving at Delphi. In this myth, Apollo actually kills the Python and throws it’s body into a fissure from which a stink was said to arise. At the same time the women who pronounced the oracles at Delphi (previously called Pytho after the serpent), were reclassified from being goddess like figure with the title of Sibyl, “meaning on who sees” to being identified as Pythias, which comes from the Greek work “to rot” (Deulofeu, Klos, Mitchell, et al, 2008, p. 30). Despite this and rather ironically, the reigning Pythia was seen as the most powerful figure in Greece (Broad, 2007), although she was always accompanied by a group of priests when pronouncing the oracle. The myth of Apollo slaying the python was re-enacted at regular periods at the beginning of the Delphi games for over a thousand years.

I identify these two myths as replacement myths (Lindhard, 2018c), which are created when there is a change over in the ruling order of society, in this case from a matriarchal society to a patriarchal society or from a female goddess religion to male god religion. It is understandable from the point of view of the replacing group but the effects produced by these myths is not only on behaviour but possibly also involves psychic and cognitive processes. It is on this level that I feel the myth of Apollo has made a lasting impact, which is still influencing us today.

A historical example of a myth that gave rise to behaviour is the Hebrew subjugation of the Canaanites, whose principle divinity was the Goddess and her symbol the snake, which represents the mystery of life (Campbell, 1991). The subjugation of women in many countries where Abrahamic male God religions predominate, can also be seen as being linked to this myth although this is slowly changing in most Western countries where women are gaining many rights that they previously did not have. Interestingly, the myth of Eve eating of the tree of life did not seem to affect how people obtained knowledge about themselves or the world they lived in because in the Bible, both the Old and New Testament, the intuitive way of knowing is fully accepted and examples can be found where both genders received information from dreams, visions, precognition and nonverbal communication with a Higher Intelligence (Lindhard, 2018c). So although women were subjugated, intuition was an accepted method of receiving information from the subconscious or elsewhere.

Intuition is seen here as "the power or faculty of attaining to direct knowledge or cognition without evident rational thought and inference" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.a). We will see later, that Adam was given the task of creating boundaries and limits through naming things.

Prior to the rise of philosophy in Greece, myths were used to explain natural phenomena. Slowly this type of explanation was replaced by information based on reason. On a time line, the different schools of Greek Philosophy all came into existence after Apollo was said to have slain the Python after his arrival at Delphi. Scott (2015) gives the date of Delphi's use as a sanctuary of Apollo as late eight century BCE and Greek Philosophy as an independent cultural genre began around 600 BCE, and its influence still persists today (Violatti in Lindhard 2018c). Greek Philosophers rejected mythology and the poetry of Homer and Hesiod and they sought to replace this way of conceptualizing reality by explaining things in terms of impersonal Nature. The break was not sharp but it involved a rejection of "the pseudo-science of divination, where one tries to know the minds of the gods" to explaining "things using reason, logic, evidence, argument, and rational criticism. . .The fundamental questions also changed to what and how, rather than who or why (Paramthottu, 2011, 13 PL 070 02F).

Reason and Boundaries

The Greeks practiced two different philosophical currents: the naturalistic and the mystical (Daniels, 1997). "Some like Socrates, Aristotle, Marcus Aurelius merged the two currents in an attempt to do justice to the unformulable complexity of life. . .But even in these men the dominant strain, characteristic of Greek thought, was the love and pursuit of reason." (Durant in Daniels, 1997). With the rise of the Greek philosophers we find a rise of a way of knowing based on reason. The logical thinking based approach of Aristotle (384BCE-322BCE), is a prime example. Aristotle believed that there were only two useful ways to obtain valid knowledge: through sense experience and logical induction and deduction (Palmer, 1998; Daniels, 1997) and his teachings promoted the view that "man's own brainpower could decipher the laws of the universe to become master of all nature" (n.a. Independent, 2009, para. 1).

Modern science is built on the axioms specified by Aristotle, which has become the default way of obtaining information. Aristotle built a system based on classification of natural processes based on logical-linear thinking. Lattuanda (n.d.) however reminds us that this way of thinking was first delegated to Adam

who "was given the task of drawing up boundaries of denomination and classification (Two modes of knowledge, para. 5), indicating that that the use of rational thinking mind by humans was much earlier than portrayed by the over simplistic view we are presenting here. However during Aristotle's time in Greece, the use of reason was in ascendancy with Aristotle classifying and ranking the things, which had been previously bounded through names by Adam. Natural processes were given the "same treatment". It was also found that these groupings could be re-ordered and assigned numbers and counted, creating new boundaries "between groups of things". New developments in logical reasoning took a time in coming and it was much later when Galileo and Kepler "invented the measurement" which "created a new type of boundary" on which to peg "theories, laws and principles that seemed to govern all kinds of events". Through these activities man was able to "seize control of nature" but at the cost of "sundering himself from it" (Lattuanda, n.d., Two modes of knowledge, e para. 5).

Reason is seen here as "the power of comprehending, inferring, or thinking especially in orderly rational ways" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.a). The history of rationality can be considered as a system that creates boundaries through naming and classification and distinguishing between beings and objects. In line with this, our educational system mainly trains students to develop their thinking logical minds with the goal of developing intelligence, which is largely related to the accumulation of knowledge.

Intuition and Union

What is not often considered is that the early Greek philosophers were also interested in the non-physical world – the supernatural. In talking about the pre-Socratic philosophers, Barnes (1972) reminds us that "Theology and supernatural may be treated dogmatically or rationally: if the Presocratics reject the blank assertions of piety and poetry, that rejection by no means entails the repudiation of things divine and superhuman" (p. 22). From what I can establish, starting from Thales, most of the early Greek Philosophers visited Egypt and had Egyptian teachers. This means these early philosophers were probably influenced by the way of thinking of the Egyptian Mystery schools. It also seems there is a connection between Delphi and Egypt as when the first temple was burnt down in 548 BC, it was the "Grand Master Amasis King of Egypt, who unhesitatingly donated three times as much as was needed for the purpose" (James, 1954, Notes, Chap. III, no 3). This suggests that the myth associated with Delphi might have been a way of introducing another way of

thinking into Greece, a country which was very fragmented at the time and as volatile as the emotions of the Greek gods and goddesses portrayed in their myths. As the Mystery Schools of Egypt probably influenced the early Greek philosophers, it seems likely that they were not only trained in reason but also intuition. However as the Mystery Schools imparted esoteric knowledge, the adepts would have been under oath not to share this aspect of their training (James, 1954).

Whereas reason requires that we delineate beings, objects and processes by naming and classifying them, access to the intuitive way of knowing requires that we break down these borders through union with the object of our interest. The rational way is focused on obtaining knowledge about the outside world through the use of our senses or extensions of them, whereas the intuitive way requires that we either go above or beyond our thinking mind and as such, it is an inner practice. "The first develops according to a linear mode of knowledge, based on reasoning and analysis, whereas the second is accompanied through a circular mode of knowledge that is immediate and direct" (Lattuanda, n.d., 'Two modes of knowledge, para 1). It is also a method that guides one to the mystery behind life itself (Lattuanda, n.d.).

The Greeks were not the first to seek to understand Nature and the Universe, however cultures prior to them, went about this task differently. As stated earlier, the Vedas in India are based on information obtained intuitively. Initially information in India was transmitted orally, only much later was it written down. According to Priyadarshi, (2014) the oldest Veda, which is known as the Rig Veda possibly dates as far back as 8000 BC and 6000 BC.

Intuition is a multifaceted concept which according to Vaughn (1998), can be seen as falling into "four distinct levels of awareness: physical, emotional, mental and spiritual" (p 185). According to Lindhard (2018c) it can be seen as a more 'primitive way' of knowing both phylogenetically and ontogenetically, because it is primary. Rationality linked to the thinking mind, only develops later. This is consistent with Arka's Theory of the Six Main Levels of Consciousness (Arka, 2013), which is beginning to be researched scientifically (Lindhard, 2016; 2017; 2018a). This research indicates that practitioners can be trained to go below their thinking minds using the Intuitive Meditation (IM) method to reconnect with the more primary levels of consciousness. Arka (2013) names the third level "Heart or Heart-Consciousness" (p.37). The quality of this level of consciousness involves feeling and it generally prevails in the area of the heart. With time, the practitioner is able to become consciously

aware from the heart rather than from the thinking mind consciousness linked to the brain. This in turn makes the person more intuitive, feeling and connected to his or her inner self or soul. As this process of discovering and experiencing the deeper layers involves going from the thinking mind to the emotional heart (Arka 2013), this level is associated with the Female Principle as most mothers have this level well developed so as to obtain information about the well being of their loved ones. This also involves the use of empathy, or becoming one with the entity one cares about. Experiences that are defined as intuitive, inspirational or psychic "frequently depend on physical and emotional cues that bring them to conscious awareness" (Vaughn, 1998, p. 185). This is different from instinct, which "remains unconscious, while intuition becomes fully conscious although a person may act on it without stopping to justify or rationalize it. The person knows something he or she needs to know without knowing how he or she knows it" (p. 186). Self awareness or awareness of one's inner world, is indispensable to developing emotional intuition. On this level information is received through feelings and sensations concerning "vibes" or "vibrations of energy" (Vaughn, 1998, p.185; Lindhard, 2018c). Both women and men can tune into this level of intuitive awareness, which can also sometimes be more physically based, which Vaughn identifies as physical intuition as opposed to feeling intuition. Another mode of intuition Vaughn (1998) identifies is mental intuition and it comes "through images or what is called inner vision" (p. 189).

The theory of Arka (2013) and the research of Lindhard (2016; 2017; 2018a) bring up the question concerning the importance of the heart in developing our intuition further. It also brings up the role of the connection between the heart and soul or Spirit, as it is through connection with our deeper Self, we can begin to live from our core being, which gives rise to intuition awareness (Arka, 2013). This is consistent with the fourth mode of intuition Vaughn (1998) identifies as Spiritual Intuition. For this level to open, the rational thinking mind needs to cede control to the feeling heart and in this way the Male and Female can be joined, giving rise to Higher States of Consciousness including Pure Consciousness (Arka, 2013). The joining of the two Principles goes beyond the scope of this paper where the emphasis is on the resuscitation of the heart-based feeling consciousness related to the Female Principle. Without the recognition of the Female Principle and the intuitive way of knowing there is nothing with which we can join the Male Principle. So the first step is about recovering a way of connecting to our deeper Self via the heart, which in turn allows us to connect with nature and the environment through union based on feeling, rather than just knowing about nature conceptually through our

thinking minds. Science can tell us all about a strawberry, its weight and dimension, its chemical composition, the difference between strawberries and other fruits, but until we pop it into our mouths and gently bite on it, we have no direct experience of strawberry which might be different for each of us. Experiencing life is like this, we can know about it through the science using the scientific method, but until we experience it consciously with full conscious awareness we are not really living to the full. In addition if we want to go a step further and connect to our deeper Self or soul, we need to become consciously aware with full involvement of our heart, which in turn brings about even deeper experiences, which are often mystical and leads us to feel more guided in our lives.

Science, Intuition and Psych Experiences

Although many of the earlier Greek philosophers used the mystical way of obtaining information (Daniels, 1997), the steady rise in reason and the rational way of knowing in science, has been accompanied by a decline in intuition, or at least the recognition of its existence. Many scientists classify research into intuition and psych phenomenon as pseudoscience in spite of there being quite strong statistical evidence, which would “be widely accepted if they pertained to something more mundane. Most scientists reject the possible reality of these abilities without ever looking at data! (Utts, 2017). This attitude by some scientists indicates that this topic might be bringing up unresolved emotional issues involving intuition and psych abilities. Based on a Jungian type of analysis, Lindhard (2018c) suggests intuition which is related to the Female Principle, has become a faculty with is part of our shadow and, as such, is then projected onto others, who are then viewed in a degrading way. We see this in the way some Western colonizers viewed the Indiginous people of the countries they invaded, little realizing that they were using a different way to obtain information and relate to nature.

Science: A Modern Day Mythology?

The rise in reason and the rational way of knowing can be seen as being accompanied by a decline in intuition. This faculty is often overlooked by the physicalist material approach, which adheres to the scientific method and does not recognize the role of intuition in generating new creative ideas. Although some scientists like Einstein admit to using intuition, it is a faculty that is under-researched today. The physicalist approach has stripped the invisible or supernatural world from their theories, and rather like the unargued fables based

on dogma that the early Greek Philosophers sought to overthrow through the use of reason; today we are left with a material world stripped of the supernatural. In the past, the mystical function of myth was aimed at “realizing what a wonder the universe is, and what a wonder you are, and experiencing awe before this mystery...” (Campbell, 2008). In todays world, materialist science can be seen as a new myth which has stripped this society of the wonder of the universe and what a wonder we are. The Western cultural myth has given rise to the idea that we are separate from nature whereas we really are interdependent and interconnected with nature of which we are a part (Campbell, 1991). This myth of being separate from nature is then perpetuated by our educational system, which in turn trains people to develop their intellectual abilities through developing the use of their thinking minds. This new myth is also related to the myth of Eve eating of the tree of life. A myth where life and ever changing nature by association with females, is seen as being “sinful” and like females, need to be subjugated. This is probably related to mans desire to control nature. Ironically in this new myth, humans have become cut off from the supernatural or non-physical realms of non-dual consciousness, from which man was originally said to fall. In addition man has become cut off from the faculty, which can help him re-experience states on non-dual consciousness. I have argued here that the myth of Apollo killing the python which is symbolically related to females and by association the Female Principle, might have influenced the minds and hearts of men which has resulted in humans being cut off from their intuition, With the depreciation of the Female Principle, related to intuition, reason became the rising star in Greece and today has become the over riding principle way of obtaining knowledge about nature in science.

Interestingly most scientists are men, and it is men who have given birth to most of the prevailing theories about the Universe. In addition it is men who have created our present day psychological theories of human consciousness, starting from Freud. Some scientists argue that theories do not really tell us about the nature of reality out there, but tell us more about the minds of the people who create the theories. If this is so, then we are living in a world of theories, which are mainly a reflection of male minds, certainly minds based on thinking and reason. Studies have shown that “there is an intimate relationship between the world we perceive and the conceptual categories encoded in the language we speak. We don’t perceive a purely objective world out there, but one subliminally pre-partitioned and pre-interpreted according to culture-bound categories” (Kastrup, 2018, para 2). It is suggested here that how we perceive the world out there, might not only be related to cultural-bound categories but

also gender-bound categories. “Feminist environmental philosophy” which focuses on the interconnections among women, nonhuman animals, and nature and ethical principles (Adams 1990; Slicer 1991), may be seen as offering another perspective in understanding nature which is different from a perspective based on reason and division through classification based on naming. In this movement, nature is used interchangeably with the term environment and this early movement has now become “an umbrella term for a variety of different, sometimes incompatible, philosophical perspectives on interconnections among women of diverse races/ethnicities, socioeconomic statuses, and geographic locations, on the one hand, and nonhuman animals and nature, on the other” (Warren, 2015, para 1). Warren (2015) maintains this philosophy can be referred in a simplistic way as “women-nature connections” (para 1).

Myths generally start by explaining the creation of the universe by supernatural beings. Our scientific theory is that the Universe starts with the Big Bang, and there is nothing supernatural behind the Universe. This is a theory can never be proven scientifically using the scientific method but it is taken as true. In this sense it can be seen as similar to prehistoric myths, which also were taken as true. These myths were living and added meaning and value to peoples’ lives; today’s scientific creation myth not only strips us of the supernatural but also does not invest our way of living with meaning and value. It is only by contemplating the role and function of myths in so called primitive societies, that we begin to understand how dry the prevailing myth has made our lives where we need to fill our lives with material objects to find some pleasure, even if it is only of a temporary nature.

Summing up

Ewoldt (2006) applies modern systems theory to the natural environment to overcome “our separation from nature--reconnecting with the nature that is within and around us--deepens conscious and sensory awareness of our connection within the web of life” (Abstract). He calls for “a more holistic strategy for achieving social and environmental justice” (V1, Conclusions, para 2) which acknowledges the awareness of the inter consecutiveness of life. This might be a start; however his approach is yet another theory, arising through the use of thinking minds. Ironically the analysis I have undertaken here also involves the use of the logical way of thinking and presenting information. However, I have also suggested that to really change ourselves we need to not recognize the importance of the Female Principle, which is related to the

intuitive way of knowing based on feeling, but incorporate it as a faculty for obtaining information. Only knowing about nature is not enough, we now need to resuscitate our intuitive abilities so can connect deeply with nature intuitively through mystical union. To do this we also need to develop the ability to connect with our deeper Self or Soul, so we can get guidance in our lives. Materialistic science has not only stripped us of the existence of the supernatural but also the way to connect to our deeper Self or Soul as this aspect of our existence is not physical, but metaphysical and therefore part of the supernatural.

The supernatural or the world beyond world cannot be approached directly through the senses, to access it we need to use another method, and for this reason we need to go above or below our thinking mind. Methods that enable practitioners to do this are known as meditation, and the primary faculty that is used is intuition. Heart-based meditation methods enable practitioners to tap consciously into different levels of their consciousness that are not normally available when they are occupied in their thinking mind. According to Arka’s (2013) theory involving The Six Main Levels of Consciousness, practitioners who go below their thinking mind using a method such as the Intuitive Meditation method (which has many similarities to a very old method known as Prayer of the Heart, which was used by the Early Dessert Fathers in the Christian tradition, the Egyptians prior to them, the Persians and certain schools in India and later by the Sufis) start awakening to levels of consciousness whose access is facilitated by, and at the same time facilitates the use of intuition. Heart based methods, are a perennial type of mystical tradition, which leads to self-discovery or the Godliness of humans (Louchakova, 2004) where intuition or direct knowing is a vital and indispensable ingredient of this process (Lindhard, 2018c)

For a new way forward, it is suggested here that both the intuitive and the rational way of knowing are needed if we are truly to become ecological beings who not only know about nature but who can also mystically join with nature to obtain information about how to solve many of the problems we have created on this planet today. This requires that we are sensitive to the requirements of other beings, including that of our planet, which is also a living conscious, being, even though the expression of its consciousness is different to ours.

Like with Jung’s anima and animus, it is claimed that both genders have the potential to develop both ways of knowing. The Female Principle opens us to connect intuitively with our deeper Self, soul or the 'unconscious mastermind'

via the heart so we can get guidance in our lives on personal issues or about any question that interests us. It also opens us to obtaining information about the wellbeing of other beings we care about through the conscious use of empathy, an emotional faculty. It is suggested here that training people how to consciously tap into their intuition via their heart, is vital for individual wellbeing as well as providing the key in how we can collectively learn to live on this planet in a more harmonious way. It is suggested that by recognizing the existence and importance of the Female Principle, we can collectively begin to work on a new educational system, which embraces not only the Male Principle but also includes the Female Principle.

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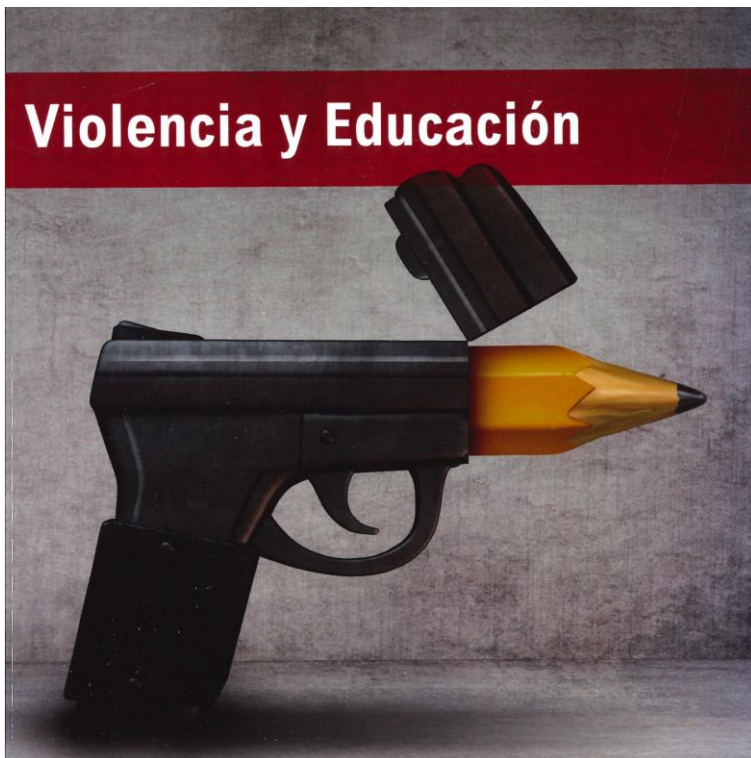
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