PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

Major Themes in the
Analytic Tradition

Volume I
Philosophy and education

Edited by
Paul H. Hirst
and
Patricia White

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Major Themes in the Analytic Tradition

In the last forty years philosophy of education has become established as a distinct area of philosophical study concerned with educational thought and practice. Twentieth-century analytic philosophy prompted its emergence as a separate subject and remains central to its contemporary flourishing.

The work collected here represents the major ideas and arguments which have come to characterize philosophy of education and in relation to which current work is now developing. As well as work more exclusively in the analytic tradition, it also includes papers influenced by Marxism, phenomenology, feminist theory and critical theory. For those engaged in research in philosophy of education, as well as those in the broader field of educational studies and educationally-oriented policy studies, it offers a gateway to an influential body of work, providing an essential map of seminal writing within the analytic and intersecting traditions.

Volume I Philosophy and education
Volume II Education and human being
Volume III Society and education
Volume IV Problems of educational content and practices

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THE ANALYTIC TRADITION AND
PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION:
AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

In the last forty years philosophy of education has been established throughout much of the English-speaking world as a distinct area of philosophical study concerned with educational thought and practice. This four-volume collection of papers seeks to present in concerted form the remarkable achievements of that period. The development of the subject came about above all because of the major revolution in academic philosophy that began around the turn of the century and which transformed not only work in traditional areas of philosophy but opened up many new areas of study, of which education was one. With the emergence of what came to be known as analytic philosophy, with its particular forms of argument and philosophical positions, the character and scope of philosophical work on educational issues became clear as never before. A period of fervent activity ensued and with that the subject as it is now widely understood emerged with its own distinct demarcatory features. Because of its origins and the continuing centrality of the approach that analytic philosophy inspired, philosophy of education, as here exemplified, we consider is best described as in the analytic tradition.

Serious philosophical consideration of the nature, content and processes of education has of course occurred from time to time throughout the history of Western philosophy but it is only in the twentieth century that such questions have received sustained systematic attention. The progressive professionalisation of education and schooling from the middle of the nineteenth century made such considerations increasingly important but it was only as the study of education in psychological, sociological and historical terms also emerged that philosophical issues began to be seen as central to educational policy and practice. Even then the precise nature of philosophy's contribution to an understanding of education proved difficult to characterise and consolidate. To some there was the history of general educational ideas as set out by major thinkers, from Plato down to Dewey and Whitehead, who worked from some recognisable general philosophical position. To others the major philosophical schools within Western philosophy had distinctive approaches and beliefs to contribute to educational thinking. The implications of, say, realism, idealism and pragmatism were seen as alternative

approaches which together formed an academic study worthy of the title 'philosophy of education'. But no such approaches proved effective in delineating philosophy's distinctive role in the determination of contemporary educational practice. They inevitably seemed too piecemeal, even idiosyncratic, too abstract and historical in emphasis to engage with important practical issues in a significant way.

Only in the USA did any direct link between sophisticated contemporary academic philosophy and educational practice emerge when John Dewey, a prominent pragmatist, became directly involved in the development of experimental schooling inspired by the substantive epistemological, ethical and political philosophy for which he argued. Here for the first time was philosophy of education directed at current educational issues, albeit from a very specific and radically controversial philosophical position. Dewey's personal influence on educational thought and practice was very considerable in the United States and in due course led to the establishment of a tradition of philosophy of education based on his ideas. But for many diverse reasons, institutional, sociological and political as well as philosophical, the serious study of education with more wide-ranging philosophical links failed to emerge.

At the beginning of the 1960s, however, recent developments in the now expanding work of analytic philosophers, above all in the UK, were clearly raising questions of serious educational purport. The possibilities of sustained and systematic analytic work in this area were beginning to emerge and it was above all R.S. Peters, an already distinguished analytic philosopher, who fully appreciated what could be done. He moved into the field and under his impressive leadership the philosophy of education in the analytic tradition was launched. The character and significance of the analytic context in which this initiative came about are perhaps best understood from the major steps in its evolution within academic philosophy.

In the early 1900s, reviving the long-established empiricist tradition stemming from the work of Locke, Berkeley and Hume, two Cambridge philosophers, G.E. Moore and Bertrand Russell, asserted, if with very different emphases, the central importance of 'analysis' as a philosophical method. By this they meant the elucidation of the meaning of any concept, idea or unit of thought that we employ in seeking to understand ourselves and our world, by reducing it, breaking it down, into more basic concepts that constitute it and thereby showing its relationship to a network of other concepts or discovering what the concept denotes. By such conceptual analysis they sought to clarify the meaning of beliefs, the more readily to establish their justification and truth. To Russell this was an endeavour to establish the foundations of all valid knowledge claims in sense experience. Moore was more concerned with the grounding of knowledge in basic simple intuitive common-sense claims into which more complex concepts and beliefs can be broken down in analysis. For both, and the younger philosopher Wittgenstein who joined them in Cambridge, the relationship between language and reality, or words and the world, became a crucial issue. It was claimed by Russell and Wittgenstein that to do its job adequately

in the development of knowledge language must be stripped of all vagueness of meaning so as to convey sharply determined concepts and propositions that are necessarily either true or false in empirical terms. Clear meaning must be built in a language that pictures in basic atomic elements states of affairs which can be directly discerned in sense experience. It is by the logical–linguistic analysis of propositional sentences that we can establish reductively their meaning and truth or falsity. By such analysis major problems in metaphysics and epistemology were claimed to be nothing more than confusions in the language being used, many traditional philosophical beliefs thereby being characterised as quite literally meaningless.

Wittgenstein's ideas as set out in his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1922) had a profound influence on a limited group of philosophers, particularly members of the Vienna Circle, several of whom asserted that to know the meaning of any proposition is through analysis to come to know the method of its verification or its empirical truth conditions. To other philosophers the more wide-ranging and generous notion of analysis pursued by Moore was more adequate to the richness of human understanding than Wittgenstein's and Russell's restrictive and technical approach. What was more, the attempt to develop in detail this technical programme proved to be fraught with ever expanding difficulties so that its whole account of the relationship of words to the world, and hence of meaning, came into question. That what can be meaningfully expressed is necessarily capable of being set out in language that ultimately pictures or mirrors in propositional form the structure of the world began to give way to a radically different view, that language can meaningfully take on many different forms devised according to diverse human interests and purposes, constrained only by our naturally given abilities and the context of our lives.

In the 1930s Wittgenstein himself came to reject totally the whole approach to meaning and the reductive account of analysis that he had propounded in the *Tractatus*. What came to replace it was the recognition that the meaning of concepts, propositions and all other forms of discourse is to be found in the uses for which language is employed. It is in the rules that govern the use of terms, the conditions and criteria for their application and their linkage to shared public activities and events, that we call grasp their meaning. In these terms analysis is concerned to map out how our language operates in communicating meaning by setting out how concepts are related to each other, no matter how complex that might be, and how meaning functions in our many diverse 'forms of life', in, say, our understanding of the physical world, expressing emotions, making promises, praying, playing games, issuing orders or teaching. Analysis so understood asserts no logical propositional form as fundamental to meaning. It asserts no mirroring of the world or any other one account of the linkage between words and experience. Propositional meaning is in no way just a matter of truth conditions of an empirical or any other kind. Significant concepts are not presumed to have a central or essential meaning that is determinate because of a strict set of necessary and sufficient conditions for their

use. Concepts may be open and overlapping in their criteria of application, all of which means that analysis is not now seen as in any sense a reductive exercise but one which explores conceptual connections in our use of language, thus seeking to sort out confusions in the discourse in which our understanding and knowledge are embedded.

In such analyses Wittgenstein endeavoured to elucidate the misunderstandings that arise when we are bemused by language's superficial structure. We mistakenly take nouns such as 'mind', 'concept' or 'number' to designate entities having at least some of the properties of objects even if abstract and immaterial. We take 'thinking' and 'willing' to be activities like physical activities yet somehow to be totally 'inner', private and independent of what is 'outer' and public, thus being seriously misled in our understanding of persons, their lives and indeed their education. In a similar way he saw our discourse as infected by deeply distorting analogies. Philosophical problems are thus above all disorders in our conceptual schemes that analysis can cure. We can thus by conceptual analysis be delivered from mistaken beliefs that confuse our understanding and our conduct. Our conceptual frameworks can be rendered more coherent, thereby enabling the development of more rational beliefs and practices.

Although Wittgenstein developed his later ideas whilst in Cambridge between 1929 and 1947 the major revolution in philosophy which he caused largely took shape in Oxford during the post-war period through the influence of his students, who increasingly worked there, and through notes of his lectures and classes circulated widely prior to the publication of his epoch-making book *Philosophical Investigations* in 1953. By 1960 important analytic work had been done on major traditional philosophical problems, such as that by Ryle (1949) on the nature of mind and Cartesian dualism, Austin (1962) on the concepts of perception and truth, and Strawson (1959) on some of the most general metaphysical categories that underpin our understanding. Others worked at less fundamental levels, for instance on responsibility and punishment in law (Hart 1968), on the language of morals (Hare 1952) and the nature of historical explanation (Gardiner 1952). It would, however, be a mistake to think that these and other philosophers fully accepted Wittgenstein's later views of philosophy or analysis and its techniques. Certain approaches and particular forms of argument used in earlier stages of the development of analysis were frequently held to be useful even if their original significance was no longer accepted. Opinions were divided on such issues as the status of ordinary language in Wittgenstein's work, on his seemingly radical linguistic relativism, on the notion of paradigm cases of conceptual use, on the precise relationship between meaning and verification, and on Wittgenstein espousing some form of philosophical, if not scientific, behaviourism. But his influence was very far reaching. Soon no traditional view of philosophy was untouched and the impetus to employ analytic methods in new areas of theoretical and practical debate was considerable.

It was in this richly developing philosophical context that in the early 1960s philosophy of education first really began to take root as a clearly demarcated area of

work. Two philosophers, C.D. Hardie (1942) and D.J. O'Connor (1957), much influenced by the early period of analysis, had already made forays into the discussion of educational ideas, if not altogether successfully. How more profitable analytical work might be pursued in the area had been more tellingly heralded in Ryle's *Concept of Mind* (1949), with its extended discussion of such educationally important concepts as knowledge, skills, intelligence and dispositions, and in Hare's direct concern for the character of moral education in his book *The Language of Morals* (1952). But in 1958 Israel Scheffler, an academic philosopher at Harvard University also working in education who was increasingly influenced by analytical developments, edited a collection of forward-looking papers, *Philosophy of Education* (1958). He followed this in 1960 with his more important book *The Language of Education* (1960), in which he sought to analyse the character and use of different categories of educational discourse and to map the central conceptual features of the concept of teaching. In 1962 R.S. Peters, who had already done significant analytical work on the concept of motivation and on fundamental concepts in social and political theory, was appointed to the Chair of Philosophy of Education at the University of London Institute of Education, where he quickly became a dominant figure, provoking enormous interest in the subject through major lectures and seminars and the publication of his inaugural lecture *Education as Initiation* (1964) and his influential major book *Ethics and Education* (1966). In these he embarked on a detailed analysis of the concept of education itself and the fundamental ethical and social principles on which the content and conduct of education could be rationally based. With the impressive expansion and steadily increasing impact of this work, especially in London, by the late 1960s philosophy of education had been established as a discrete, clearly identifiable domain of philosophical work marked above all by its powerful analytical methods.

The distinguishing features of the subject area, as seen by Peters, are perhaps most clearly set out in his first paper, which stated his own view of the matter, and in the Introduction to *Ethics and Education.* In these he outlined the 'second-order' concern of philosophy with forms of thought and argument expressed in Socrates' questions: 'What do you mean?' and 'How do you know?', and Kant's questions about what is presupposed by our forms of thought and awareness. This means, he maintained, that the philosopher is engaged in

> the disciplined demarcation of concepts, the patient explication of the grounds of knowledge and presuppositions of different forms of discourse. Philosophers make explicit the conceptual schemes which (competing) beliefs and standards presuppose: they examine their consistency and search for criteria for their justification. This does not imply that philosophers can only produce an abstract rationale of what is in existence, like a high-level projection of the plan of a house. For enquiry at this level can develop with some degree of autonomy.

> Presuppositions can be drastically criticized and revised; grounds for belief can be challenged and new ones suggested; conceptual schemes can be shown to be radically inconsistent or inapplicable; new categorizations can be constructed. The philosopher is not entirely the prisoner of the presuppositions of his age.
>
> (Peters, 1966)

He then goes on to distinguish between those branches of philosophy which are concerned with the analysis and justification of answers to theoretical questions about what is the case, why and when, and that branch concerned with practical questions, questions about what ought to be the case and with reasons for action. Educational issues he sees as necessarily raising both types of question before they can be settled and the philosopher's task in this area as therefore being to apply to educational concerns analyses of concepts and theories of justification that have been developed in other branches of philosophy – especially in ethics, social philosophy, epistemology and philosophical psychology. He suggests four main areas of work.

1. The analysis of concepts specific to education, an area which can be seen as falling under philosophical psychology and social philosophy.
2. The application of ethics and social philosophy to assumptions about the desirable content and procedures of education.
3. Examination of the conceptual schemes and assumptions used by educational psychologists about educational processes.
4. Examination of the philosophical character of the content and organization of the curriculum and related questions about learning.

> (*ibid.*)

In this characterisation of philosophy of education it is important to note that from the start Peters refused to be dogmatic about the nature of philosophical analysis. This openness was no doubt in part the result of his very considerable studies in classical philosophy, the history of modern philosophy – especially social philosophy and the British empiricists – and the history of psychology. It is no doubt also in part the result of the many different contemporary influences on him during his formative years, influences ranging from the work of Moore, Ryle and Wittgenstein to the personal impact of study and collaboration with Popper, A.C. Mace, Oakeshott, Hamlyn and Phillips Griffiths.

The central features of Peters' philosophical position were thus being formed when new and distinctive types of philosophical analysis were being developed – and hotly disputed. At times he voiced his own uncertainties about the character of techniques and the precise significance of their results. This can be seen in his return from time to time

to a number of topics of central concern to him, especially the analysis of the concept of education and the justification of the content of education. He at times clearly used forms of argument that suggest that some 'central' or 'essential' meaning of a concept, such as 'education', might be elucidated as an anchor for future deliberations and that perhaps universally. But he was aware that if this analysis was to be taken as setting out what education should entail in practice then its practical adoption would need the most rigorous justification. He came to be more and more sceptical about any search for universal notions, increasingly recognising the influence of social context on all conceptual schemes. He also later recognised how few concepts of significance in education, or elsewhere, can be sharply analysed in terms of clear necessary and sufficient conditions for their use.

He was likewise never concerned to defend ordinary language as if it provided Moorean-type foundations for meaning or knowledge. Indeed he was much concerned about the development of the specialist understanding available to educationists in psychology and sociology and the importance of philosophers working in constant association with such specialists in the development of educational theory. Further, he considered it necessary for there to be, and himself sought to provide, arguments setting out the place of the conceptual schemes of common sense within psychological research. What he sought to do in education was to examine the language educationists use, whether everyday or technical, so as to explore the concepts underlying this for their coherence and applicability, and thus their significance in educational argument. But he was also acutely aware that the conceptual apparatus by means of which we understand education is closely interlocked with both the most general conceptual schemes we use and the substantive beliefs that we hold concerning the nature of human beings, reason, knowledge, morality and social and political matters. He considered it essential therefore that philosophers of education should seek to illuminate the most wide-ranging philosophical context within which educational notions are of their nature to be understood.

Peters set out the task and character of philosophy of education with remarkable perceptiveness. He managed to capture its distinctive features both as a developing domain of contemporary philosophy and as a major discrete area within educational studies. He saw philosophy as a developing discipline incorporating the methods and achievement of conceptual analysis into its traditional major concerns. He also saw clearly how the discipline could embrace specifically educational issues and thereby contribute profoundly to our understanding of the purposes, content and processes of education. He was deeply committed to the development of the subject in these terms and through the clarity of his vision, his enthusiasm and the excitement of the work he produced, he immediately attracted a group of able, philosophically trained, school teachers and lecturers to join in the enterprise. In addition he persuaded a number of distinguished philosophers in other areas to contribute work on educational issues from time to time. His context at the Institute of Education was also propitious. Philosophy of education had already been demarcated as a distinct area of study by Directors determined to develop research on

academically rigorous foundations. The Institute was already nationally and internationally renowned for its numerous distinguished faculty members and in the 1960s it embarked on a major expansion with programmes of advanced academic training for present and future faculty members in universities and colleges of education. In these circumstances the philosophy of education department grew steadily from three faculty members to ten, who shared to a considerable degree Peters' interests and aspirations whilst complementing each other in their educational and philosophical expertise. By 1980 a considerable body of significant work had been published in the subject, primarily by those at the Institute or closely linked with it. With a steady stream of advanced students from home and overseas, a flourishing academic journal and the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain run successfully for over fifteen years, the discipline could by then claim to be firmly established in academic and institutional terms within the UK.

In the USA the early development of analytic philosophy of education was altogether more restrained than in the UK, taking place against a very different background in academic philosophy and in different institutional circumstances. Until well into the twentieth century American philosophy was dominated by the indigenous pragmatism of Peirce, James and Dewey with its strong scientific roots. It is therefore not surprising that when analytic philosophy began to have some impact during the 1930s it was the early analytical ideas of members of the Vienna Circle, several of whom moved to the States, that were most influential. The strong empiricism and deep interest in the philosophy of science that resulted had, and continues even now to have, a profound effect on American philosophy.

By the mid-1950s, when the later analytic approach of Wittgenstein was transforming British philosophy, the greatest force on the USA scene was the work of Quine (1953), who while sharing some of Wittgenstein's later ideas nevertheless radically rejected the most fundamental tenets of his approach. Both philosophers saw the diverse uses of language as central to meaning. Both rejected any *Tractatus*-type reductionism in which the foundation of meaning and knowledge is to be had in simple propositions that picture or mirror basic elements in sense experience. Both saw concepts as open-ended and inevitably ambiguous in much of our language use. But Quine was nevertheless a convinced empiricist, seeing all meaning and knowledge as scientific in character, even philosophical understanding. Meaning, he held, is rooted in a behaviourist account of language in which words are related to the world causally. For Wittgenstein, by contrast, the relationship is a matter of conventional rules, which can be broken or changed. As a result meaning is not to be equated with any system of behavioural responses to words but in the conventionally established rules for the use to which we put words. However complex in detail, Quine's view of meaning and knowledge is still in the end a form of empirical reductionism. To Wittgenstein meaning is to be found in the very diverse language of games we have devised in which we make sense of ourselves and our world.

In keeping with his general position, Quine's view of mental events is of phenomena that are irrelevant to our understanding of human beings and their activities, including those of education. A strict behaviourist account is ultimately all that is available. Wittgenstein certainly held that behavioural criteria are crucial to our understanding of human beings and that our language misleads us into quite mistaken ideas of minds as private domains containing aspects and events known only to introspection. But he was not denying the crucial distinction between feeling pain or imagining things and related forms of public behaviour. Nor was he prepared to consider these states to be merely physical occurences in the brain. He was arguing hard that as living beings we have many complex closely interrelated characteristics and capacities and that our understanding of them can only come by our revealing in close detail from under our confused linguistic use the coherent conceptual schemes that capture what we are, how we act and indeed how education is to be understood and conducted. But further, Quine's strict behaviourist approach in the end denies the very autonomy of language on which Wittgenstein's later notion of analysis rests, analysis as a second-order pursuit.

It was against this distinctly antipathetic major movement in academic philosophy and the existence of a variety of numerous rival approaches, traditional and contemporary, such as neo-Thomism and existentialism, that analytic philosophy in Wittgenstein's later sense had to make its way. It did so, however, making steady progress, mainly in the hands of Americans who had spent time in Oxford. From 1960 analytic philosophy of education equally began to grow steadily in a number of different centres, notably Harvard, Teachers College Columbia and Illinois, though without either the major grouping or institutional support on the scale found in London. But through the medium of the Philosophy of Education Society and the journals *Education Theory* and *Studies in Philosophy and Education* the analytic tradition took root in the USA largely independently of any connections with the London Institute of Education.

In Australasia and Canada work was initiated primarily by university teachers strongly influenced by work in London, who were joined by others who studied in the USA, notably in Illinois. In Sydney the influence of John Anderson, a senior Australian academic philosopher with a long-standing interest in educational questions, combined with that of Quine's ideas to give a distinctive controversial focus and a radical stamp to some of the work there. Throughout Australasia the links with London grew slowly weaker and the subject developed its own ethos and agenda with a flourishing Philosophy of Education Society and a major international journal, *Educational Philosophy and Theory*.

Viewed overall, by 1980 analytic philosophy of education had become a robust discipline with its own momentum, constantly drawing life and energy from developments in academic philosophy and from demands for ever more rationally constructed educational theory and practice. Its achievement over twenty years had

been remarkable, as the papers in this collection written during that period clearly testify, a minute fraction though they are of the literature published in that period. It included, appropriately, self-conscious analysis of the subject's own philosophical character and its place within the wide field of educational theory as a whole. The very nature of education, its purposes and their justification had been analytically mapped and examined as never before. The conceptual structure of beliefs about the nature of human beings, their capacities and the place of such considerations in education had been exposed with greater clarity. The social and philosophical significance of education had been located within the context of fundamental social concepts and principles. Many of the central concepts and beliefs in terms of which we determine and structure the content and practices of education had been analysed and critically examined. Yet in all these areas the work done served only to reveal what more was waiting to be tackled. Here was but the start of a new enterprise in our understanding of education in which analysis would have ever wider and more detailed application and in which its approach would receive the critical self-reflection required of any sophisticated discipline.

But by then there were already indications that analytic philosophy in general was changing its character in significant respects. Conceptual analysis as exemplified in Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* was no longer being seen as philosophy's only concern. It became widely held that such work resulted not only in the removal of confusions in the conceptual schemes of our common discourse but in tacit support for our most fundamental beliefs within those schemes, concerning for instance the nature of persons, language, knowledge, society and moral values. As it became clear that different groups of, say, religious believers, political theorists, moral philosophers, epistemologists or educationists clearly use alternative conceptual schemes, some saw conceptual relativism as the only possible outcome of analysis. Others saw Wittgenstein's notion of 'forms of life', which our conceptual schemes articulate, as indicating that analysis itself must ultimately lead to an anchorage of understanding that is by no means entirely relative. In the 1980s traditional philosophical beliefs were once more coming fully to the fore, their validity now being examined analytically and critically in relation to their social and historical contexts. Analytical work was leading to a new consideration of long-standing issues in the whole history of philosophy, as in the work of MacIntyre (1981) and Taylor (1985). Reconnected with its own historical roots, analytic philosophy was itself becoming part of the long tradition of philosophy and a powerful revitalising force within it.

The transformation that was to take place throughout academic philosophy at the time was heralded above all in social and political philosophy by Rawls's outstanding book, *A Theory of Justice.* Rorty's *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* inaugurated a massive reconsideration of the foundations of knowledge. At the same time MacIntyre's

After Virtue (1981) had a similar impact on moral philosophy and Charles Taylor's (1985) papers on human nature and the human sciences deeply influenced ideas about persons and their social relations. In the 1980s the centre of this wide-ranging work moved progressively from Oxford to a number of universities in the USA, promoted significantly by much-increased transatlantic exchange and institutional changes in the UK. But in philosophy as in most other areas the academic community was becoming increasingly unified internationally, embracing new interests and emphases. By the late 1990s work with strong roots in the analytic tradition now has considerable involvement with work from quite other traditions, notably those of Marxism and critical theory, existentialism and postmodernism. But of the continuing importance and achievements of the analytic tradition developed now over nearly a century there can be no doubt.

Against this background analytic philosophy of education since 1980 has been marked above all by much reassessment and reworking of the most fundamental issues within the discipline. In this the subject has paralleled and, of course, benefited greatly from the fundamental work that has been undertaken in all the major branches of academic philosophy on which philosophy of education must draw. Recent work has been notable for its much wider philosophical interests and scope and its much greater detail. Earlier work can now be seen to have presupposed without adequate critical examination many philosophical beliefs and forms of argument associated with the Enlightenment and particularly Kant. As the papers in Volume I of this collection make plain the widely held conceptual framework that was elucidated with care and subtlety in the early years of the discipline is now widely understood as justifying a particular view of the relationship between theory and practice and a particular conception of the educated person as a rationally autonomous individual. Approaches to moral and social education, educational content and its structure, teaching, motivation and many other features of education were mapped and defended in much detail within this scheme. But once its underlying concepts such as those of the individual person, society, right, good and theoretical and practical reason were seriously challenged within academic philosophy a wide-ranging debate on the general character of education and on detailed understanding of it was inevitably opened up. Much of great importance has been, and is still being, learned in the debates within the discipline. Not that the earlier understanding of education is simply rejected. Far from it. Much of the conceptual mapping and many of the arguments retain their validity, if their place in our overall understanding is not now as it was previously held to be. The relationship of the individual to society is currently being elucidated as never before, as also is the constitutive nature of persons. What constitutes human flourishing and the formation and conduct of good lives is being formulated anew. The implications of this work for our grasp of what education entails, not only in its most general terms but also in more specific details, are clearly considerable.

The papers in the volumes that have been written since 1980 exemplify the development of analytic philosophy of education from its earlier phase. But they exemplify too the contemporary state of the discipline in its approach, its areas of concern and its achievement. It is also hoped that they express something of the liveliness of a well-founded and robust tradition that has already done so much both to clarify the distinctive role of philosophy in our understanding of education and to contribute to the development of educational theory and practice.

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THE RATIONALE OF THE COLLECTION

The previous section has provided an account of the historical development of the analytic tradition in philosophy and philosophy of education. The collection itself allows scholars from many different parts of the world writing in philosophy of education, and broadly sharing the perspectives of the analytic tradition, to speak for themselves. It is not, however, confined to that tradition. There is also work, for instance, from the perspectives of Marxism, phenomenology and critical theory, where this, often taking the form of critique, has been in fruitful interaction with the analytic work. As a result, the work collected here represents the major ideas and arguments that have come to characterise philosophy of education and in relation to which contemporary work is now developing.

For those engaged in research in philosophy of education as well as those in the broader field of educational studies and educationally oriented policy studies it offers a gateway to an influential body of work. Clearly in 1600 pages it cannot provide a totally comprehensive survey of the field, but it does offer an essential map of seminal writing within the analytic and intersecting traditions. It is also possible for readers to pursue leading ideas in the field through considerable further literature by consulting the often extensive footnotes and bibliographies to the papers as well as the bibliographical suggestions made in the introductions to the individual volumes. To make clear the extent and contours of this significant body of work, it will be helpful to explain the editorial decisions that we made about whole areas of the field in order to produce a coherent selection within the given space constraints. For making some work salient has entailed making other work less salient and excluding some areas of work altogether.

Setting the limits

To explain, then, the decisions which shaped the collection:

- It does not include any exegetically focused studies of historical philosophers or philosophers of education where the attention is fairly and squarely on the

philosopher's contribution for its own sake. The decision to exclude such historical studies was made purely as part of the process of setting reasonably clear and workable limits to the project. Thus, regrettably, none of the stimulating work which seeks from a contemporary standpoint to reinterpret and re-evaluate the educational writings of figures like Rousseau, Russell or Dewey finds a place here. Had we not set ourselves this limit, it is hard to know what criteria we could have employed to make a fair and judicious selection of what, in the interests of overall balance, would have inevitably been a small number of papers from this rich source of material. This is not to say that treatment of historical writers finds no place in these volumes. As would be expected, the arguments of many contributors are shaped in the light of classical work, like that of Aristotle and Kant. In addition, too, a number of writers develop arguments which involve in a very substantial way the work of philosophers like Nietzsche, Dewey and Heidegger. But in these cases the interest is in the authors' use of these philosophers in developing their own self-standing arguments. Indeed, this parallels the way in which the work of contemporary philosophers writing in other areas of philosophy outside of philosophy of education, like MacIntyre, Rawls, Dworkin, Gadamer, is often used extensively by writers in these volumes in developing their own educationally focused arguments.

- There are no conspectus papers concerned to survey the state of philosophy of education, whether from the standpoint of a particular area of the world or at a particular point in time. Whilst we frequently found such papers of great help in giving a picture of different perspectives on our subject as well as in making particular selections of material, it seemed to us that such material would be quickly dated. To some extent, too, inclusion of such material would have inevitably reduced the number of papers devoted to discussions of substantive issues and arguably would have made the collection less useful to readers keen to acquaint themselves with what philosophers of education have to say about particular issues of relevance to their own work in philosophy of education or other areas of educational studies.

- The introduction provides a broad picture of the recent historical development of the subject. However, the collection itself is not an historical treatment of the field. It is by no means our purpose here to chart the historical development of the subject and in so doing particularly to mark the first emergence of new lines of thought, so honouring their initiators, as an historically focused treatment would demand. For instance, it may seem that a surprising omission in Volume I is Richard Peters' inaugural lecture 'Education as Initiation' but in this case we preferred to select his revision and amplification of the ideas in a paper written almost a decade after the inaugural lecture. To this far more sophisticated development of Peters' position we could then counterpose a paper by R.K. Elliott, a penetrating critic of his mature position. In making this and other similar decisions our aim is to place the discipline centre-stage and to produce a collection of work which will help people to under-

stand its major concerns and which will contribute to its further development. These, then, were the decisions which helped to establish the character and framework of the collection.

At this point it might prove helpful to give a broad sketch of how this framework works out concretely in terms of subjects and sections before going on to explain further considerations which influenced it and the nature of its contents.

The framework of the volumes

The material is organised in the four volumes to bring out four relatively distinct areas of philosophical work. Volume I is primarily concerned with topics that establish the character of the area as a whole: philosophy of education as a philosophical pursuit; the relationship between educational theory, including philosophy of education, and educational practice; and different conceptions of the educational enterprise as a whole. Volume II, drawing on the substantial body of relevant work in philosophy of mind, is devoted to the examination of education and human nature. Notions of human nature underpin all educational ideas and practices and philosophical work here forcefully illuminates what is at stake. Human capacities for autonomy, the development of knowledge and understanding, the domains of the emotions and imagination and the educational significance of the notions of needs, interests and happiness are subject to scrutiny and evaluation. Volume III, with its philosophical roots in prominent concerns of political philosophy, examines social values and education, concentrating on the presuppositions and values, like justice and democracy, informing the context, organisation, distribution and substance of education. Volume IV, which focuses on problems posed by the content and procedures of education, draws more eclectically on a number of areas of philosophy. In so doing, it illuminates general matters of curriculum design, particular controversial curriculum areas and processes of teaching and learning.

The framework and its contents: some comments

First, a general point about the organisation of the material into sections and between volumes. Clearly other organisations of the material were possible. Many papers could have been allocated to any of a number of sections as they deal with a range of linked issues. For instance, issues to do with education for personal autonomy (Volume II) are of their nature closely related to pluralism in education (Volume III). The place of the arts in education (Volume IV) is linked to concern for development of the imagination (Volume II) and to issues in moral education (Volume IV). It seems to us, however, that the framework we have adopted and the allocation of papers within it

have much to commend them, since they reflect traditional divisions in philosophical work and major areas of educational concern.

The individual introductions to each volume should make clear significant linkages between material in different sections and volumes. Together with the full table of contents in Volume I and the author index to papers, they should make it easy for readers to find cognate material in other parts of the collection.

An important feature of the collection is the place given in it to debates. These show the interplay of argument within the subject and display it as a living and lively tradition of critical discussion of matters which are at the heart of education. For instance, to take an example from each of the volumes, the nature of the relationship between educational theory and practice, the emotions and their place in education, the nature of civic education in a democratic state and the place of competition in education are topics in which at least two and sometimes more writers in this collection are in contention. The decision to include such debates has involved difficult judgements. In long-running debates, for instance, we have had to decide at what point to make our selection. Should it be at the beginning, to capture the freshness of the initial encounter, or at some later stage, when the major points at issue are becoming more sharply focused? Again, we have had to decide when to cut off debates and exclude further participants or not allow the re-entry of the protagonists. Such decisions have not been easy but at least, in a number of significant cases, the introduction to the relevant volume will indicate how readers who wish to pursue the lines of argument further are able to do so.

So much for organisation. A perhaps obvious point needs to be made about the material organised. In assembling this collection we could select and organise only material which actually existed. We had no brief to commission new work. Unsurprisingly, therefore, this collection reflects the areas in which philosophical energy has been productively invested in the recent past. To illustrate, in all sections of Volume III, *Society and Education,* we had an abundance of work from which to choose and could have filled the space several times over. Our final choice of material was painful and attended by regret for important and influential work which could not be included. What we were facing here was the rich harvest of work which, as the journals over the last ten years or so testify, has been devoted to issues of education and democracy, pluralism, the need to confront the theoretical challenges of Marxism, postmodernism and so on. By contrast, issues connected with education and human being in Volume II, after attracting much interest in the 1970s, have suffered something of a decline in recent years. The relative size of these two volumes reflects this difference.

A connected point: we came to recognise that there is no natural law which says that all books must have suitable extractable passages. In vain we sought to extract material from some writers who had clearly, from our point of view, made too good a job of melding their work into an integrated book-length treatment, too cohesive for

any part to be sensibly removed. Again the individual introductions mention some such cases so that readers can pursue the debate further. This underlines our earlier point that it cannot be assumed that all the best work in philosophy of education is between these eight covers. Some of it resisted inclusion and resulted in the surprising and regrettable absences of some authors.

There is a further reason for the unfortunate absence of some authors and indeed some whole areas of interest. One effect of highlighting those areas which have been the focus of important work, sometimes for several decades, has been to limit the number of topics covered. This has meant that distinguished work in a number of areas, as yet less extensively developed, like, for instance, professional ethics, philosophy and educational research, sport and physical education, and science education, is not represented. We do not regard this as a happy situation but see it rather as one example of the impossibility of satisfying all the diverse demands involved in attempting to represent a large and growing academic field. The establishing of some framework for such a project was clearly necessary and yet any framework, however generously flexible, will involve the regrettable exclusion of some items.

Philosophy of education in the broadly conceived analytic tradition is a widely spread international endeavour, and increasingly so. The provenance of papers in the major journals and much of the work presented at the conferences of the International Network of Philosophers of Education are evidence of this. Whilst this collection reflects the international nature of the field, it does not include, again to our regret, work from all those areas of the world where there is vigorous and significant philosophical activity. For instance, philosophers from the Netherlands, Belgium and Israel are absent. It is also to be hoped that the growing interest in this tradition in philosophy of education shown by countries of the Pacific Rim like China, Japan, Korea and Taiwan will be reflected in future collections like this one.

From the fact that the *word* 'gender' appears in the list of contents only for Volume IV readers should not conclude that feminist work is under-represented. There has been considerable work over the last couple of decades from feminist perspectives, particularly, but not only, in the USA. Appropriately, therefore, this finds a place in many different sections throughout the volumes, often challenging well-established positions. Needless to say, as by now itself a well-established tradition of thought, it is in turn subject to question and dispute.

It is hoped that this general explanation of the framework – its purposes, what it highlights and what it excludes – will prove a helpful guide to the use of these volumes. In addition, the brief introductions to the individual volumes seek to provide essential background by giving a context to the selection of material, as well as offering some suggestions for further reading, and readers may well find it useful to read them before tackling the individual papers.

INTRODUCTION

The overall introduction to the collection has situated it historically in the analytic tradition as it developed particularly in the UK, USA and Australia in interplay with other locally prevalent philosophical traditions. The broad, general themes heralded in the introduction to do with the nature of philosophy of education, its links with other branches of philosophy, its place alongside the other disciplines which contribute to educational theory and the nature of education are reflected in this volume.

In this way the topics of Volume I are concerned to establish and situate the fundamental character of philosophy of education. Hardly surprisingly, they are not treated once and for all here, but are also taken up in later volumes. The overall collection has had perforce to be divided into volumes, sections and subsections, but links between these are strong and manifold and this is particularly true of the work in this volume. Volume I can be seen as offering a necessary and important prologue on the nature of philosophy, educational theory and the broad aims of education. It is, however, very much a prologue, out of which unfold dynamic and intricately woven narratives that involve, in Volume II the nature and attributes of those to be educated, in Volume III the social context for this, and in Volume IV considerations about the content of education and the ways in which it should be conducted. This introduction therefore aims to offer some insight into the way that themes first initiated here are taken up in other volumes and intersect with further themes as yet unannounced. For, as the historical introduction makes clear, philosophy of education draws powerfully on traditional branches of philosophy like philosophy of mind, political philosophy, ethics, epistemology and aesthetics to delineate complex and integrated pictures of what is involved in educating human beings in a community. This introduction, like the introductions to the other volumes, attempts, by tracing significant connections between topics and papers, to give some sense of the intricate patterning of work which goes to make up these diverse pictures.

Overview of the sections

In the first section, as already indicated, writers in the broadly conceived analytic

tradition and critical commentators on it discuss the nature of philosophy of education in relation to other areas of philosophy and philosophical traditions. The second section focuses on discussions of the relationship of philosophy of education to educational theory and practice. The final section concentrates on the central topic of the nature and aims of education.

The comments on the individual sections which follow are largely concerned to highlight issues which span the divisions between sections and volumes. We have not attempted to provide detailed summaries of the papers. Having chosen papers on grounds of their clarity in setting forth complex arguments on important topics, there seemed to us little purpose in attempting to compress those ideas into a few, possibly misleading, sentences. Our comments sometimes single out substantive themes in the papers but the theme thus highlighted may well be a subsidiary one for the author, yet one which links interestingly to other papers. References to work in other volumes and sections are indicated by the volume and section number. For references to work *not* in these volumes the reader is referred appropriately to the bibliographies and footnotes of individual papers or the bibliography to this introduction.

Part I: Philosophy and philosophy of education

All the papers in this first section explore, from varying perspectives, the nature of philosophy of education and make claims about what philosophers of education should see as their primary concerns.

The first three papers centre on analytic work in philosophy of education in the early part of this period. Introducing them is an extract from an introductory monograph for students by Paul Hirst and Richard Peters, explicitly addressing the question of the nature of analytic philosophy and what it might be expected to accomplish when applied to the philosophical problems raised by education. Abraham Edel's seminal paper (referred to by three of the other writers in this section) discusses not this extract but Peters' (1966) analysis of education in his book *Ethics and Education* and his subsequent revision of that in 'Education and the Educated Man' (1970), raising questions about how we know when we have a correct or adequate analysis of the concept of education. What are the grounds, as he puts it, for preferring Peters II to Peters I? As part of his emphasis on the necessarily normative nature of philosophy of education, Edel comments that he has not seen any philosophical discussions of the controversies surrounding Black, Puerto Rican or Mexican–American studies. The papers by Richard Pratte and Walter Feinberg in Volume III, Part I show that in time this and related issues were to be addressed with astute sensitivity. Peter Gilroy's paper, which includes an excellent bibliography covering discussion of the nature of analysis by general philosophers and philosophers of education, looks critically at the early work of Hirst and Peters, including the extract which introduces this section, and

Hirst's paper 'Liberal Education and the Nature of Knowledge' reproduced in Part III of this volume.

R.K. Elliott's paper doubts the appropriateness of seeing Richard Peters as primarily an analytical philosopher and one whose main concern, according to his own self-description, was in becoming clear about relatively concrete issues relevant to the teacher in the classroom. He argues that Peters's work, drawing on his wide-ranging background in classical philosophy, gives powerful expression to a Stoic view of life and should be seen as placing education in the whole context of human being. This task Elliott sees as constituting the raison d'être of philosophy of education and he explores certain of its aspects in his paper, 'Education and Human Being' in Volume II Part II.

John Haldane argues in his paper that in attempting to answer the question 'what is education for?' philosophy of education cannot proceed without assuming some metaphysical base to its inquiry. In Haldane's view, James Walker and Colin Evers, whom he terms 'Australian naturalists', are correct in seeing the force of this point but mistaken in the metaphysical base they rely on. Haldane himself prefers to defend a version of Aristotelian naturalism, recognising at the end of his paper that if he is correct, this poses a problem for some versions of political liberalism, those, for instance, of Rawls and Dworkin, which hold that the principles that shape liberal institutions and policies should not be philosophically controversial. This paper connects with John and Patricia White's discussion of this issue in Part III of this volume and the extensive discussions of education in liberal democratic states in Volume III Part I.

Colin Evers' paper discusses two post-analytic alternatives to what he sees as the now outmoded analytic paradigm and elaborates on the approach of the 'Australian naturalists', mentioned by Haldane, as well as that taken by those, like Wilfred Carr, influenced by critical theory.

These papers by no means exhaust contributions to the debate on philosophy of education and its appropriate future directions. The 1980s in particular, which, as the historical introduction indicates, was more generally a period of reappraisal and fresh initiatives in philosophy of education, saw a considerable number of attempts to make revisionary assessments of the field. An influential selection of these is mentioned by Haldane in footnotes 2 and 3 of his paper and to these should be added Richard Peters' (1983) paper reviewing the field in the two decades preceding 1980.

Part II: Educational theory and practice

The first paper in this section represents a small segment of a long-running debate in which Paul Hirst and a number of protagonists sought to elucidate the nature of educational theory and its relationship to educational practice. Hirst charts the earlier exchanges in the 1960s and 1970s with D.J. O'Connor, offers critical responses to

later critics and finally provides a thoroughgoing revision of his own earlier position. The debate did not end at this point. (See, for instance, John Elliott's (1987) paper, which, drawing extensively on Gadamer's work, critically examines Hirst's revised position.)

James Walker's discussion in the next paper overlaps with that of Hirst. For one target of Walker's criticisms is Hirst's early views of the 1960s and what Walker documents as the 'commonsense consensus' that sees education as an interdisciplinary study in which distinct disciplines are somehow brought to bear on educational problems. Noting the problems that even subscribers to this view have with it, he suggests a pragmatically based alternative. This paper with its robustly critical stance towards analytic philosophy connects with Evers's paper in the previous section.

The cluster of three papers which follows focuses on the nature of the notion of practice in the theory/practice debate and might as easily have been placed in the first section of this volume. As the third symposiast, David Cooper, remarks, since the earlier papers by Carr and Jonathan are concerned with the philosophical methodology of examining the concept of practice, this symposium concerns nothing less than the proper conduct of philosophy itself. Highly relevant to this symposium and the earlier papers in this section is Joseph Dunne's (1993) insightful study, initially prompted by his concern about what might constitute rational practice in teaching, of the notions of *phronesis* and *techne* in Aristotle and their use by later writers, including Habermas and Gadamer.

Jonas Soltis's paper in this section suggests that philosophers of education have particular obligations as professionals to address certain topics and audiences. For instance, they have a particular responsibility in the public domain to contribute to the shaping of public policy and, more broadly, constructively to examine the values and purposes underlying society's educational arrangements. This paper has not gone unchallenged, however, and Harvey Siegel (1988) has argued that the sole obligation of professional philosophers of education is to do credible philosophy of education and that may typically require them to distance themselves from educational policy and practice.

Part III: Conceptions of education

Richard Peters returned a number of times to reconsider his analysis of education, as the historical introduction indicates, and the paper reprinted here is a carefully wrought presentation of his mature views. R.K. Elliott's critique is appropriately searching and insightful. Paul Hirst's paper 'Liberal Education and the Nature of Knowledge' follows. It is subject to critique in this volume by Gilroy in Part I and by Jane Martin in the immediately following paper, 'Needed: A New Paradigm for Liberal Education' and by R.K. Elliott in 'Education and Human Being' and 'Objectivity and Education'

in Volume II, Part II. Regarded as a highly controversial paper, it has been the target of much critique. Elaborations of the thesis and modifications to it in the light of early criticisms are to be found in Hirst (1974). A full but not exhaustive list of writings making critical reference to Hirst's work, and including further details of specific critiques of this paper, can be found in Barrow and White (1993). Hirst himself in the last paper in this section also takes a critical stance to it.

Michael Oakeshott's work is referred to many times, too many to note here, by contributors to this collection. In this paper he defends a certain conception of education, noting the deformation to which this can be subjected by some ways in which it may be institutionalised. An overview of Oakeshott's views on education, which he nowhere set out systematically but which are scattered in a number of perceptive papers, can be found in Peters (1974).

In 'The Ideal of the Educated Person' Jane Martin argues forcefully that the ideal of the educated person found in Richard Peters' writings, but also more widely in philosophy of education, is defective because it sets up an ideal of a person who possesses certain traits and dispositions traditionally associated with men. This educational ideal is inadequate for men and women. In contesting Martin's claims Siegel raises questions about the nature of philosophy of education and the tasks that philosophers of education should tackle which link this debate with the concerns of Part I of this volume. Further papers from a feminist perspective are found in Volume III Part IV and Volume IV Part I, and in Martin (1994).

The paper by John and Patricia White could as easily have been found in Volume III, Part I, since, drawing on MacIntyre's ideas, it attempts to offer a solution to the value neutrality at the heart of some liberal thinking, which seems to render problematic educating children to come to have certain traits, dispositions and commitments. For a book-length treatment of education and its connection with the good life for human beings, which has some of its roots in the ideas of this paper, see White (1991).

Michael Bonnett's paper might also have been found in Volume III Part IV as, invoking Heidegger, it challenges two contemporary conceptions of education and of human nature that inform them. For Bonnett, the liberal/rationalist and the humanistic Marxian traditions influential in education today are destitute.

Like the authors of the previous two papers, Paul Hirst in the last paper takes a revisionary stance towards rationalist approaches to education. He argues that education is appropriately seen as centred on social practices, some basic and some optional, including second-order reflective ones which enable individuals to direct their personal and communal lives.

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Part I

PHILOSOPHY AND PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

1

EDUCATION AND PHILOSOPHY

Paul H. Hirst and R.S. Peters

1 The contemporary situation

To be a teacher at the present time should be both disturbing and challenging. There are, of course, many schools where the old routines persist while only the faces change in the classrooms and where, in the staff-room, the conversation revolves only round the idiosyncrasies of the children, the latest idiocies of the government, clothes, cars, gossip and the best places to go for holidays. But more often practices in the classroom are changing as well as the faces, and the stock subjects of conversation in the common room are punctuated by controversies about what should be done in the school.

The teacher should find this situation disturbing; for the staff-room may be divided into factions and generate a constant pressure on him to identify himself with one group or the other. Roughly speaking he is likely to find the traditional, more tough-minded point of view and the progressive, more tender-minded point of view. The former will stress the importance of knowledge and skill, traditional subject divisions and the crucial role of examinations; the latter will protest that learning to learn is more important than the actual acquisition of knowledge, that the curriculum should reflect the child's interests and needs, the traditional subject divisions being artificial impediments to the child's natural curiosity, and that examinations are an élitist device whose main function is to encourage a sense of rejection and failure. The former will favour formal class instruction as a teaching method and will not be averse to using punishment to maintain discipline, whereas the latter will favour group projects and individual activity methods and will regard punishment as an unjustifiable expression of the teacher's sadism.

The challenge of such a situation is obvious enough, especially as this opposition between approaches to education represents an artificial polarization, a caricature of the alternatives open to teachers in performing their tasks. There is first of all the intellectual challenge involved in trying to make up one's mind about complex questions to which there are not as yet, and perhaps never can be, definite answers. There is also the practical

challenge presented by the real possiblity of trying out alternatives to see which is better. There is, of course, the ever present problem of the criteria by reference to which one says that one type of teaching or curriculum is better or worse than another. But at least there exist more possibilities for experiment in the present situation than ever existed before. Indeed, many would say that the illusion is so widespread that change must necessarily be a good thing, that teachers are becoming too easily pressurized into abandoning well-established practices.

It is one thing to find a situation challenging but quite another to have the equipment which is necessary to cope with it. Without such equipment teachers are likely to develop an irrational type of loyalty to one of the factions in the current controversy or to be very much at the mercy of the headmaster or the local 'expert'. It is our conviction that the philosophy of education is an indispensable part of the equipment which the teacher needs in order to form a clearer, better informed and better reasoned opinion about most of the matters under discussion. This presupposes a certain view of philosophy; so something of a preliminary sort must briefly be said about the authors' view of it as an activity.

2 What is philosophy?

Philosophy is an activity which is distinguished by its concern with certain types of second-order questions, with questions of a reflective sort which arise when activities like science, painting pictures, worshipping, and making moral judgments are going concerns. Not all reflective, second-order questions, of course, are philosophical. A teacher, for instance, can reflect about what prompts people to paint pictures or about the connection, if any, between painting pictures and social class. These are reflective questions in that they presuppose that the activity of painting pictures is a going concern. But they are not philosophical questions. Indeed they are part of the domain of two other types of enquiry which are also important contributors to educational theory, namely the sciences of psychology and sociology.

What, then, distinguishes philosophy from other forms of reflective enquiry? Let us take an example; for one of the cardinal points in philosophical method is to show points by means of examples. Supposing one teacher says to another: 'You should not punish children by keeping the whole class in' and another says 'That's not really punishing them; and how do you know you shouldn't do this anyway?' The second teacher is dealing philosophically with the moral judgment made by the first teacher. What makes his reply philosophical? What sort of reflection does it exemplify? It involves reflection about the *concept* of 'punishment' and about the sort of *grounds* which are good grounds for making a judgment of this sort. Philosophy, in brief, is concerned with questions about the analysis of concepts and with questions about the grounds of knowledge, belief, actions and activities.

This rather bald assertion should give rise to a host of questions. But two connected questions would obviously present themselves to the practically minded. The first question concerns the nature of conceptual analysis itself. Is it, for instance, a matter of defining terms carefully? The second question is how going into the meaning of terms, or probing into the grounds of knowledge, helps anyone to tackle the type of question which sets the enquiry off. Maybe at the finish one's head is a bit clearer than at the start. But whether or not keeping the whole class in is to be called punishing the children, the question still has to be faced of whether they ought to be kept in or not. Can philosophizing about the situation shed any light on this very practical problem?

3 Conceptual analysis

Let us first of all address ourselves to the question of what it is to analyse a concept. What is a concept? It obviously is not the same as an image; for, to revert to our previous case, we can have a concept of 'punishment' without necessarily having a picture in our mind of a criminal being hung or a boy being beaten. Is to have a concept then to be able to use the *word* 'punishment' correctly? If we have the concept, it might be said, we can relate 'punishment' to other words like 'guilt' and say things like, 'Only the guilty can be punished'. Indeed it was the understanding of this connection that probably led one of the teachers in our imaginary conversation to say that keeping the whole class in did not constitute 'punishment'; for guilt had not been established. This ability to relate words to each other would also go along with the ability to recognize cases to which the word applied.

This looks a much more promising approach to making explicit what it is to have a concept. But it will not quite do for two reasons. In the first place we often make distinctions between things or group things together but have not got a word for marking the difference or similarity. Are we then to say that in such cases we have no concept? This would mean denying that animals, which make quite complicated discriminations, have any concepts. It would mean that children, who behave differentially towards their mother very early in their lives, have no concept of their mother until they can use the word 'mother'. And what is the point of being so restrictive? Would it not be better to say that our possession of a concept is our ability to make discriminations, and to classify things together if they are similar? To be able to use a word appropriately is a sophisticated and very convenient way of doing this. Indeed it could be regarded as a *sufficient* condition for the possession of a concept though not a *necessary* one. In other words, we would probably be prepared to say that a person had a concept of 'punishment' if he could relate the word 'punishment' correctly to other words such as 'pain' and 'guilt' and apply it correctly to cases of punishment. But the absence of this ability to use the word would not straightaway lead us to say that he had not the concept. He might, for instance, get upset when he saw cases of wanton cruelty but not get upset when he saw cases of

punishment; but for some reason or another, he might not have been introduced to the words which have been developed for marking these distinctions.

The second reason why it is not altogether satisfactory to *equate* having a concept with the possession of an ability, whether it be the specific ability to use words appropriately, or the more general one to classify and make discriminations, is that both types of ability seem to presuppose something more fundamental, namely the grasp of a principle which enables us to do these things. Locke said that an idea is 'the object of the understanding when a man thinks' and this is probably as near as we can get to saying what a concept is. But it is singularly unilluminating. As, however, our understanding of what it is to have a concept covers both the experience of grasping a principle *and* the ability to discriminate and use words correctly, which is observable in the case of others as well as ourselves, there is, amongst philosophers generally, a tendency to rely on this publicly observable criterion of having a concept. For it is possible to say more about it than it is about the subjective side. This public criterion is necessary to identify having a concept, but having a concept is not identical with it.

So much, then, for the object of our scrutiny in this branch of philosophical activity. But what do we do in philosophy when we *analyse* a concept? As the concept in question is usually one the possession of which goes with the ability to use words appropriately, what we do is to examine the use of words in order to see what principle or principles govern their use. If we can make these explicit we have uncovered the concept. Historically, philosophers such as Socrates attempted to do this by trying out *definitions*. Now there is a strong and a weak sense of 'definiiton' in such cases. The weak sense is when another word can be found which picks out a characteristic which is a logically necessary condition for the applicability of the original word. Thus, to revert to our case of 'punishment', a logically necessary condition for the use of this word is that something unpleasant should be done to someone. If it were not, if for instance someone who committed a crime were sent on a pleasure cruise, we would refuse to apply the word 'punishment'. Part of our concept of 'punishment', therefore, is that something unpleasant is inflicted. The strong case of definition is when conditions can be produced which are logically both necessary and sufficient. In other words if one can say 'if and *only* if characteristics x, y, z are present, then a person is being punished', we would have a really strong sort of definition. In actual practice, we only have such definitions in artificially constructed symbolic systems, such as geometry, where we lay down tight conditions for the use of words such as 'triangle'. With words that are employed in a much looser way in ordinary language, such as 'courage' and 'justice', we would be hard put to it ever to find such a tight set of defining characteristics. In conceptual analysis we usually settle for making explicit defining characteristics in the weak sense.

In attempting to make explicit the rules behind our usage of words, and thus get clearer about our concepts, it is important to distinguish *logically* necessary conditions from other sorts of conditions that may be present. To understand this difference is, in

fact, to understand the difference between doing philosophy and doing science. It is probably the case, for instance, that acts of punishment are performed only by people with central nervous systems. But we would not have to know about that in order to understand what is meant by 'punishment'. Indeed countless people understand perfectly well what is meant by 'punishment' who have never heard of a central nervous system. The possession of a central nervous system is, therefore, only a general *empirical* condition of punishment rather than part of our understanding of 'punishment'. The connection, therefore, between 'punishment' and the possession of a nervous system is quite different from the relationship between, say, our understanding of 'hearing' and the possession of ears. For the possession of this particular part of the body is inseparable from our understanding of what it is to hear something. We could not conceivably hear without ears of some sort. Similarly, it is only an empirical fact that most learning is brought about by some form of teaching. But 'teaching' could not be *conceived of* without some reference to learning. 'Learning' therefore, enters into the analysis of 'teaching', for this connexion is not purely *de facto*.

Now though much of what has been called conceptual analysis seems to consist in looking for logically necessary conditions for the use of a word, and hence to be concerned with 'definition' in a loose sense, it has become fashionable in recent times to deny that it is ever possible to produce such definitions. Ordinary language is not static; it is a form of life. If we think that we have got a concept pinned down, we are apt to come across a case where we would naturally use the word but where the condition which we have made explicit is not established. We might think, for instance, that a necessary condition of using the word 'punishment' is that something unpleasant should be inflicted on the guilty. Yet we do talk of boxers taking a lot of punishment. And of what are they guilty? Wittgenstein made this general point by taking the example of 'games'. He claimed that there is no one characteristic in terms of which roulette, golf, patience, etc., are all called 'games'. Rather they form a 'family' united 'by a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing; sometimes overall similarities, sometimes of detail' – rather like the similarities between faces of people belonging to the same family. There is, he argued, no one characteristic or group of characteristics that all games possess in order to be called 'games'.

This, at least, should warn us that we may not always be successful even in our search for logically necessary conditions for the use of a word. But sometimes we may be. Is there, for instance, a use of 'punishment' in which there is *no* suggestion of something unpleasant being inflicted on someone? Actually it can be doubted whether Wittgenstein was even right about this particular concept. For how would we know which samples to lay out in order to look for the similarities? Why did not Wittgenstein take gardening or getting married as examples of games? Does not this show that there is some more general principle which underlies calling things 'games' which he might have overlooked? It might be argued that gardening or getting married might be ranked by someone as games. But

this brings out that whether something is a game or not does not depend on any simple observable property of the sort that makes a thing a triangle. Rather it depends on how a human being conceives an activity. A necessary condition of calling something a game is, surely, that it must be an activity which is indulged in non-seriously. Now 'non-seriously' does not mean that the player lacks involvement in it or that he does not give his attention to it. Rather, it means that he can conceive it as not being part of the 'business of living'. He does not do it out of duty or prudence or for any other reason of that sort. This example brings out two points which Wittgenstein himself made. The first is that we must not look for defining characteristics in any simple, stereotyped way, with the paradigm of just one type of word before us. The second is that concepts can only be understood in relation to other concepts. 'Non-serious' has to be understood in relation to a whole family of concepts included under 'serious'.

Thus if we are attempting an analysis of concepts by examining the meaning of words, we usually proceed by taking cases within their denotation and trying out suggestions about defining characteristics. This is how Socrates, for instance, proceeded in the early part of *The Republic* in order to get clearer about 'justice'. He took different cases and tried out suggestions such as 'justice consists in giving every man his due', 'justice is the interest of the stronger' and so on. In this way we gradually make explicit the links between words which reflect our conceptual structure. But we must also pay attention to what we mean by using a word in the sense of the job that we conceive of the word as doing in the context in which we employ it. For words are not just noises or marks on paper; they are more like tools. They do specific jobs in social life. We could, for instance, only understand what 'non-serious' means when applied to games if we have an understanding of the form of life which renders some things 'serious'.

Obviously one of the main jobs that words do is to convey information, to describe things and situations. But this is only one of their jobs. Sometimes we use words to warn people. At other times we use words to suggest courses of action to people. At other times we use words to express what we wish. And so on. The use of words, in other words, is a form of purposeful behaviour, but it has to be understood in terms of the other non-linguistic purposes that people have in their social life. Commands, for instance, such as 'Halt' have to be understood as having a specific sort of function in social situations where some are in authority over others and where they are expected to direct the behaviour of their subordinates by using words in a certain tone of voice.

Usually the way in which words are put together in what are called 'sentences' gives a very good clue to the job that they do. Sentences can be used to make statements (or assert propositions). When they do this they are usually couched in what grammarians call the indicative form. If we say, for instance, that the motorist was punished for exceeding the speed limit we are stating a proposition that can be either true or false. The job done by the words in this case is, therefore, to describe or indicate a state of affairs that is assumed to have occurred. The point of such an utterance, in other words, is to

convey information. But when the headmaster uses the sentence 'Punish the boy' his words, which are now arranged in the imperative form, do not state anything that is true or false. They have a different function, that of getting someone to do something. The grammatical form of a sentence can be, however, rather deceptive. When, for instance, it is asserted that a child needs love, it looks as if the sentence is simply stating a fact, or conveying information. But it could be argued that what the sentence is really doing is to lay down standards about how a child should be treated, that it has, in other words, a guiding function. 'Need' in this context, is performing a normative role. And there are some words such as 'right' and 'wrong', 'good' and 'bad' which almost always have this general function of laying down standards of conduct.

If, therefore, we are trying to analyse a concept it is important to realize that this cannot be done adequately by just examining the use of words in any self-contained way. We have to study carefully their relation to other words and their use in different types of sentences. An understanding of their use in sentences does not come just by the study of grammar; it is also necessary to understand the different sorts of purposes that lie behind the use of sentences. And this requires reflection on the different purposes, both linguistic and non-linguistic, that human beings share in their social life.

4 The point of conceptual analysis

The question is often put to philosophers when they have done some conceptual analysis: 'Whose concept are you analysing?' The first answer, obviously enough, is *our* concept. For concepts are linked indissolubly with the social life of a group, and it would be impossible for an individual to have a purely private concept of, say, 'punishment'. But, it might be said, there are subtle differences between groups of language users, and though there are obviously common elements in a concept there are also likely to be different emphases and differences in valuation, as, for example, in the case of the concept of 'education'. But this type of objection really misses the point of doing conceptual analysis, which is to get clearer about the types of distinction that words have been developed to designate. The point is to see *through* the words, to get a better grasp of the similarities and differences that it is possible to pick out. And these are important in the context of *other* questions which we cannot answer without such preliminary analysis.

Ordinary language is a record of connections and distinctions that men with predominantly practical purposes have found it important to make. It is therefore a valuable guide, but it should never be treated as a repository of unquestionable wisdom. Ordinary usage, for instance, reveals in the case of 'punishment' a connection that practically minded people insist on between the committing of an offence against rules and the infliction of something unpleasant on the offender. In so far, therefore, as we talk about 'punishment' we acquiesce in this demand that ordinary language reflects.

Conceptual analysis helps us to pin-point more precisely what is implicit in our moral consciousness. But it also enables us to stand back a bit and reflect on the status of the demand to which the word bears witness. It frees us to ask a fundamental question in ethics, which is that of whether this demand is justified. In our view there is little point in doing conceptual analysis unless some further philosophical issue is thereby made more manageable.

The first thing to say, therefore, about the point of doing conceptual analysis is that it is a necessary preliminary to answering some *other* philosophical questions. We cannot tackle the question in ethics of whether there are any good reasons for punishing people until we are clear what we mean by 'punishment'. Questions of analysis in other words are often linked with questions of justification. Socrates raised questions about the meaning of 'justice' because he was also interested in the reasons that there might be for living a just life. But there are also other more all-pervasive conceptual questions with which the analysis of a particular concept is often linked. These are usually called metaphysical questions, those that deal with categories of thinking which structure a conceptual scheme. We employ for instance, concepts such as 'thing-hood', 'causality' and 'time' to make the world intelligible. In metaphysics the status of such categoreal concepts is examined. Could we, for instance, dispense with the concept of 'consciousness' in making human behaviour intelligible? These are general questions about the justification of our conceptual schemes.

The linkage of conceptual analysis with these other types of philosophical question explains the fact that philosophers do not indulge in an undiscriminating analysis of any old concepts. They do not attempt the analysis of concepts such as 'clock' and 'cabbage' unless there are further issues with which the analysis is connected. Questions, for instance, might be raised about clocks if some philosophical issue about the status of temporal distinctions was at stake. There is much about vegetables in Hume's *Dialogues on Natural Religion* because his interest in justification, in this case in the theological argument from design, led him to examine the different types of order in the world. Why should not its order, he asked, be more like that of a vegetable than that of a house? Similarly Aristotle raised questions about the nature of vegetables because he was interested in the general nature of living things and in the role of 'purpose' as a categoreal concept. But without an interest in such further questions what is the point of doing conceptual analysis?

It is difficult to understand, too, how all interest in any such further philosophical questions could itself be self-contained. It is difficult to conceive, for instance, how a person could be interested in philosophical questions such as 'How do we know that we ought to punish people?' unless he is also interested in the moral question of whether or not we ought to punish people. Philosophers often devote themselves to analysing the concepts of the particular sciences and to enquiring into the epistemological status of the methods of enquiry employed. They ask questions, for instance, about the concept

of 'the unconscious' and about the validity of psycho-analytic methods in testing hypotheses. But it is often difficult to separate an interest in such general philosophical questions about the status of consciousness from more particular questions about the validity of psycho-analytic theory. Philosophy, as has been explained, is concerned with second-order questions about science, morality, religion and other such human activities. But the point of asking such questions is usually provided by concrete worries at the first-order level. Lavoisier, for instance, was led to make important discoveries in chemistry through an interest in its conceptual scheme. His interests were in part philosophical even though he was professionally a scientist. But he could not have asked such questions in such a precise form without a passionate interest in and detailed knowledge of the phenomena which chemists were trying to explain.

Thus, though a philosopher could be worried about the concept of 'the unconscious' because, like Ryle, he is concerned only with some metaphysical thesis about the status of the mental, he could also be worried by it as a psychologist concerned with giving a theoretical explanation of concrete phenomena. A philosophical psychologist would probably be afflicted by both sorts of worry! A philosopher might be worried, similarly, about 'the state' because he had a general interest of a metaphysical sort in 'the general will'; or he might be worried about it because, like Locke or Burke, he had a practical interest in rights and representation. But in all such cases the concern about concepts has point because of some further concern. To do conceptual analysis, unless something depends on getting clearer about the structure underlying how we speak, may be a fascinating pastime, but it is not philosophy.

Once it is appreciated that conceptual analysis must have some point, it can also be appreciated that the inability to emerge with a neat set of logically necessary conditions for the use of a word like 'knowledge' or 'education' is not necessarily the hall-mark of failure. For, in the process of trying to make explicit the principles which underlie our use of words, we should have become clearer both about how things are and about the sorts of decisions that have to be faced in dealing with them. We are in a better position to look through the words at the problems of explanation, justification or practical action that occasion such a reflective interest. To revert to the example from which we started: that of 'punishment'. An analysis of this concept reveals the connection demanded by men that pain should be inflicted, usually by those in authority, on offenders. This makes explicit much that is of ethical significance. There is first of all a problem about the infliction of pain; for this is usually regarded as something that is prima facie undesirable. How is this to be justified? Supposing it can be, on the grounds that it will deter others from committing similar offences and produce less unhappiness in the long run than not inflicting it. Why then should it be inflicted on the offenders? For the concept of 'punishment' seems to require this as well. Surely because of some in-built notion of justice that requires discrimination against people only on relevant grounds. But how can justice be justified, in general and in this particular application of the principle?

Surely too, the operation of punishment as a deterrent presupposes a very important assumption about human beings, namely that they are responsible for their actions in the sense that they can be deterred by a consideration of foreseen consequences. And is this assumption justified? Is it not an assumption of great moral significance, because of its connection with our notion of man as a chooser? What would happen to our social life if we gave it up? Then there is the connection between 'punishment' and 'authority'; for we can only distinguish punishment from some cases of revenge because those who inflict the pain, like fathers and teachers, are authorized to do this. But what is meant by 'authority'? And call this type of institution be justified? What is the role of authority in social life?

If pursued in this way the analysis of the concept of 'punishment' does at least two very important jobs. Firstly, it enables us to see more clearly how a concept is connected not only with other concepts but also with a form of social life that rests on a network of interlocking assumptions – e.g. about human responsibility, rights connected with authority, and the role of pain in our lives. We thus begin to get a better understanding of the type of social life to which we seem to be committed if we admit the necessity of punishment. Secondly, however, by laying bare the structure of this concept we also show the extent to which it rests on certain moral assumptions which can be challenged. To discuss their status would take us far into moral philosophy.

Now to what extent would our inability to produce a set of logically necessary conditions for the use of the word 'punishment' be detrimental to these further purposes that lie behind conceptual analysis? Suppose, for instance, we can produce cases of the use of the word 'punishment' where guilt has not been established – as in the case of the schoolmaster who keeps all the class in. Suppose people talk of a boxer receiving 'punishment' when there is neither guilt nor anyone in authority who administers the pain. Surely by reflecting on such cases our understanding of our social life is increased as well as our sensitivity to the complexity of moral issues. We come to distinguish what are often called central cases of the application of 'punishment' from more peripheral ones. The central cases are those in which all the conditions are present which enable us to distinguish 'punishment' from other allied notions such as 'revenge', 'spite' and 'coercion'. The existence of such cases explains how 'punishment' performs a distinctive function in the language which reflects our social life, how people come to acquire the concept, and how people come to use derivative expressions such as boxers taking a lot of punishment. By determining which cases are central we come to learn a lot more, not just about words, but about the structure of our social life and the assumptions which underlie it. If, for instance, we challenge the moral assumptions which underlie punishment we will be led to see what else we may be challenging as well. It is only if we think that there must be some essence in the nature of things or institutions, which our concepts reflect, that we will be dismayed if we fail to produce a hard and fast set of logically necessary conditions for *all* uses of a word. If we do not hold such a crude view of the

relationship between words and things we will not measure the success of conceptual analysis by the extent to which we can produce definitions. Rather we will measure it by the extent to which our understanding is thereby increased about how things are in the world and of the possible stances that we can adopt towards our predicament in it.

5 The philosophy of education

It is possible to make a rough and ready distinction between philosophers who are interested in the most general questions about the nature of the world, together with our grounds for knowledge in general, and those who are interested in the concepts, truth-criteria and methodologies of particular forms of thought and activity such as science (including social science and psychology), history, morality, mathematics, art and politics. It is therefore possible, roughly speaking, to distinguish the highly general enquiries of metaphysics, together with logic and theory of knowledge (epistemology) from the more particularized philosophies of differentiated forms of enquiry, appraisal and action, such as the philosophy of science, history, mathematics and religion, together with ethics, aesthetics and social philosophy. Manifestly the philosophy of education is of the latter type. But it is not a separate branch of philosophy in addition to them; for 'educating' is a very hybrid type of activity. Philosophy of education, therefore, draws on established branches of philosophy and brings together those segments of them that are relevant to the solution of educational problems. There are philosophers of the former sort who sometimes illustrate some general theme by reference to educational concepts. A good example is Gilbert Ryle, who deals with concepts like those of 'training' and 'drill' in the course of defending a general metaphysical thesis about the nature of mind. Generally speaking, however, philosophers of education are specifically interested in educational matters and philosophize in order to get clearer about how things are and about what should be done in this particular realm.

In order, however, to philosophize, the philosopher of education can seldom turn to just one branch of philosophy. If he is interested, for instance, in problems of teaching and learning from a theoretical point of view, because he is simply puzzled about why some children learn and others do not, he will be drawn into philosophical psychology which deals with theories of human development, with types of learning and their relationship to teaching, and with theories of motivation and concept formation. He may also be led into the philosophy of history, mathematics and science in order to get clearer about what is distinctive of these particular forms of thinking. He is more likely, however, to be practically interested as well, in that he is also actively concerned with questions about what ought to be done in education. In this case he will have also to study ethics and social philosophy in order to arrive at clearer answers to questions about what should be put on the curriculum, about teaching methods, and about how children should be treated.

Assuming that the philosopher of education has both a theoretical and a practical interest in education, it can easily be shown in a more formal way what branches of philosophy will be of central interest to him. Educating people suggests developing in them states of mind which are valuable and which involve some degree of knowledge and understanding. It is obvious, therefore, that the philosopher of education will have to go into ethics in order to deal with the valuations and into theory of knowledge in order to get clearer about the distinction between concepts such as 'knowledge', 'belief' and 'understanding'. As knowledge is divided up on a curriculum into branches such as science, mathematics and history he will also have to reflect upon what is distinctive of these different branches of knowledge.

Educating people is not done by instant fiat. It takes time, and a variety of different processes of learning and teaching are involved in it. The philosopher of education will therefore have to study philosophical psychology in order to get clearer about the nature of human development and about differences between processes such as instruction, indoctrination, conditioning and learning by experience. Questions about processes, however, are not purely psychological; there are also questions about how much freedom children should be allowed, about whether or not they should be punished, about the authority of the teacher and the rights of students. The philosopher of education will have to go into social philosophy in order to deal adequately with questions of this sort.

In setting out what is central to the philosophy of education in this schematic way we are, of course, fastening on certain features of the concept of education which seem to us to be of particular significance – especially its connection with knowledge and understanding. We do this here simply to indicate, however briefly, the range of philosophical issues with which the subject is concerned. Such a conception of education must impose its stamp on the curriculum, teaching, relationships with pupils, and authority structure of the school or college community. The hope is that philosophical study as here set out will do something to deepen our understanding of how we are placed as educators and make more explicit the dimensions in which decisions have to be made.

2

ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION AT THE CROSSROADS

Abraham Edel

On the American scene, there was a sharp change in the philosophy of education that was manifest at least by the late 1950s. It consisted in a shift from what was to a great extent either a Deweyan-centered outlook (whether in acceptance or attack) or an outlook identified in terms of one or another large-scale philosophical system, to a new-broom analytical model. In part it was tied to some effort of rapprochement between academic and educational philosophy, bringing to the latter the mood that was in the ascendant in the former.

The sort of analytic philosophy that proved attractive was not the formalistic positivist type, but the British ordinary-language type. After all, education did not and does not operate with refined or high-powered symbolic systems; it is still itself an ordinary-language activity. Yet the turn to analytic philosophy of education of this type[1] was in one sense surprising at that time. For it was after World War II, the world was in ferment, colonialism was breaking down, Africa and Asia were emerging into the modern world, a massive upsurge was imminent of the oppressed and the disadvantaged everywhere, including the United States, and the demand was in sight for the extension of educational opportunity as well as for some share in political power. Traditional institutions in all areas of life were questioned, if not actually already crumbling. One might have expected to find in American educational philosophy at least an echo of the demands for social reconstruction as an educational obligation that had been loudly advanced by philosophers of education in the depression decade of the 1930s. A revolutionary educational philosophy might have seemed much more plausible than a cool analytic one. But perhaps the fuller social picture itself makes the intellectual outcome understandable. America was in the throes of a revived capitalist ideology, corresponding to its dominance after World War II. There were calls for the restoration of the status quo in the global cold war. Neo-conservative ideologies in an atmosphere of McCarthyite repression made a virtue of obscurantism and equated intellectualism with near-subversion.

Dominant educational groups had themselves called for gearing American education to the objectives of the cold war. Although with the Russian launching of Sputnik I, the upgrading of the intellect was demanded as a crash program for American education, this meant chiefly producing scientists and engineers. Perhaps the demand for neutral analysis was itself as revolutionary a step as the philosophical intellect could venture under these conditions! It may be recalled that in academic philosophy, political and social philosophy were at very low ebb; the brightest spirits went into the logic of the social sciences instead.

Now it is generally evident that the analytic approach has in the past fifteen years turned into a 'school,' with all the philosophical disadvantages of hardening lines of division, attack and counter-attack familiar in the conflict (as contrasted with the dialogue) of philosophical schools. This would be less significant if the attacks on the analytic philosophy were just rearguard actions by older entrenched philosophical tendencies, or by philosophical romantic importations. In fact, however, they come increasingly, in the philosophy of education, from the younger people, who are concerned with the problems of actual teaching in a period of intense social transformation, and who see little relevant guidance coming from philosophy of education in its analytic shape. I was particularly struck by these complaints, and the polarization they involved, at a recent conference on 'New Directions in Philosophy of Education' held April– May 1970 at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.[2] One of the younger critics put it this way: 'I come from the trenches of teaching to the Pentagon of Philosophy, and am dismayed to find the generals playing chess.'

Now of course philosophers of education are not generals, and they have no inclination to give orders to teachers; indeed, value-neutrality is a major tenet in the analytic creed. But the discontent expressed in the metaphorical quip is not so easily thrust aside. For even practitioners in analytic educational philosophy have begun to raise the question of whether it is adequately fulfilling its promise. In this sense, what is currently called analytic philosophy of education may be thought of as standing at the crossroads. What is at issue is precisely its potential in the philosophical contribution to education. The aim of the present paper is to diagnose the situation and to suggest what is required to enhance its contribution.

I The theoretical diagnosis

A central difficulty in analytic philosophy of education seems to me to reflect a soft spot in the analytic theory generally – how to judge what is a correct or adequate analysis. Insofar as the analysis is linguistic analysis, one would expect it to issue either in an empirical–linguistic outcome or in a phenomenological resolution – in both of which the decision of adequacy would be a factual issue – or in some pragmatic– evaluative judgment determined by the purposes of the specific inquiry. Instead, we find a costly hesitation. In part, as early participants in the British analytic movement

will say, the question did not arise. They had wandered into new pastures and were too busy culling the uses; there were enough to go around and if anyone stopped short, he could usually be brought to continue by a counter-instance. Where would it end? It might never end.

But this was a symptom. The basic diagnosis lies deeper. Analytic method was given a certain cast by the dogmas it inherited from logical positivism. There was the sharp separation of philosophical analysis from empirical inquiry, the sharp separation of the analytic from the normative, and the sharp separation of the analytic from genetic–causal accounts. (Left on its own in this way, analysis was robbed of all vital criteria for decision; hence the symptom fixed on above.) Now all these sharp separations were essential to positivism. And they made a certain sense, for positivist analysis was concerned with building large formal systems. System building can go on by itself in some degrees, without asking what factual structure it might apply to, or what purposes it might further, or what sociocultural forces begot it. Analysis here can call its own tune without being brought to account till it is finished. The risk it runs is having a beautifully elaborate formal system that serves no purpose after it is built! But ordinary language analysis cannot defer payment in this way. It is analyzing linguistic uses that are thoroughly embedded in particular contexts. It has to face promptly non-formal conditions which are material in character, and the context when fully explored is inherently purposive – not only in the general purposes of language, but in the specific goings-on that give meaning to the uses. It is not surprising that the more J.L. Austin explored the uses of words, the more he was led to abandon the great dichotomies – to see illocutionary elements in the idea of truth and to reject the broad fact–value dichotomy.[3] Indeed, all the dogmas would have been rejected in analytic philosophy if the notion of context had been taken with full seriousness and if linguistic change had been as well-tilled a field as linguistic pattern.

If such a diagnosis is correct, the remedy would seem to lie in a fuller integration of the empirical, the normative, and the contextual (especially the socio-cultural) *within* the analytic method. This is the major point of the present analysis. I shall try to show by selected case study from analytic philosophy of education that there is a growing loss of faith in analysis as a separate self-sufficient process, but that a remedy is being sought only by *adding* empirical, genetic, or normative elements. The key to an adequate remedy lies in the demonstration that these are not elements to be added to a separately performed analysis but play an internal part in the analytic products themselves. Hence integration, not just addition, is the cure.

II The unhappy analytic consciousness

The first step in presenting my thesis is to see the form taken by the loss of faith in the powers of the analytic method. I have not carried out a study of the field from this point of view, and am relying largely on impressions which others may not share. Let

me take, as a good example of what I have in mind, a recent paper by Professor Jonas F. Soltis of Teachers College, Columbia University, himself an avowed analytic philosopher of education, entitled 'Analysis and Anomalies in Philosophy of Education.'[4] Professor Soltis sets his account in the framework of Thomas Kuhn's theory of scientific revolution.[5] Soltis traces the rise of the analytic paradigm in educational philosophy, how it displaces or sweeps into oblivion traditional questions and approaches, how it achieves dominance, and then how it develops its own anomalies. He explores two such anomalies. One is internal to the analytic paradigm itself 'in that careful, cumulative, and persistent use of analytic techniques to clarify the concept of learning has brought with it disturbing results which run counter to the expectations of those who believe in the power of the paradigm to make clear, precise, and distinct "fuzzy" categories.' The second anomaly is external: 'previous educational questions concerning values and social issues persist as major philosophical problems in education, but seem to be resistant to the strategies of analysis.'

Whether these anomalies – or the situation as a whole – fits Kuhn's pattern is not my present concern. The second anomaly seems to amount simply to the fact that having expunged values from analysis as such – 'One can ask for clarification of the idea of equality of opportunity, but he cannot ask if the schools *should* provide for equality of opportunity' – it remains frightfully difficult to prevent them from creeping in sideways. Soltis illustrates from R.S. Peters's varying attempts to locate the *worthwhile* within the analysis of 'education.' Soltis takes Peters in effect to be asking and answering general ethical questions which the analytic paradigm would disallow. This question – whether 'worthwhile' should be included or omitted from the analysis of 'education' – seems to me to raise problems chiefly for the reason I indicated at the outset, that there is no well-defined procedure for deciding which of competing analyses is more adequate. I shall look at Peters's treatment more explicitly later.

The first anomaly is the more formidable one. It concerns the distinction into types of learning that was the outcome of analytic grappling which began with Ryle's distinction between *knowing that* and *knowing how.* Voicing no dissatisfaction with the analytic job that developed the distinction and turned it from kinds of knowing to kinds of learning, Soltis offers it as a matter of fairly general consensus that there are at least four types: learning *that,* which is propositional; learning *how to,* which furnishes procedures or skills; learning *to,* whose outcome is dispositions, propensities or tendencies; and states of attainment via learning, such as appreciation and understanding. (One can, he illustrates, learn a poem but fail to appreciate it.) I should like to stress that Soltis's dissatisfaction arises not from the analysis but from the state of affairs we are left with when the analysis is finished. I need not go into his several reasons for dissatisfaction; more important is why he regards the outcome as an anomaly. The anomaly is that analytic procedures intended to produce distinctions end up with distinctions that do not distinguish. He illustrates with the way in which the very conditions of propositional knowledge involve procedures (*how* to pattern data to constitute a proof), and attainments

(appreciation or understanding). He reinforces this with reference to Scheffler's detailed analysis in *Conditions of Knowledge.*

I have given this brief sketch of Professor Soltis's points to show the character of the unhappy analytic consciousness. As an analyst in the philosophy of education, Soltis simply wonders whether his methods have done jobs that get anywhere. He conjectures that what may be needed is 'to try to find more acceptable answers or different ways to ask the questions . . . .' He toys with an appeal to a philosophical–empirical study of genetic epistemology for the first anomaly, and a kind of hybrid 'analytic–pragmatic' paradigm for the second. In short, he wants to stop shutting out the empirical and the evaluative in the name of a 'normal' paradigm of analysis.

If Soltis's account is at all typical of the dissatisfactions with the analytic method among analysts, then there is obviously a reaching out for what the method has kept beyond bounds. But it is not a thoroughgoing reconstruction of the method – simply an adding of the empirical and the evaluative to the analytical. I have suggested in the proposed remedy that this is not enough. I think I can suggest the line of integration needed if we go over the ground in the examples Soltis has given, and ask how the analyses themselves took place. I focus first on the distinction between kinds of knowledge.

III The strange career of 'knowing that' and 'knowing how': a closer look

The relation between analysis and philosophy of education in the examples given illustrates the one-way sovereign stance: educational philosophy is the handmaiden of philosophy; philosophy furnishes the analytic products; philosophy of education digs them up, brings them to teaching and structures learning and teaching. But what do these analytic products represent? As they come from ordinary language, they represent collective and accumulated ordinary experience. There is here the assumption that learning and teaching fall into the ordinary middle-sized domain. They are not like physics, which has had to dip to the micro-domain and fashion its own language; or mathematics, which, as Ryle said of formal logic, had to drill ordinary words to behave in strange ways. Now there is much to be said for this whole approach. At best it might presuppose a view parallel to the effort in one stage of positivism (e.g., Neurath) to give physical-object sentences a primacy (over other forms like sense-data, for example) as the protocol sentences of science; and to turn micro-constructs into instruments of macro-description. This would show the continuity of science and ordinary experience.

But education, after all, represents a large domain of experience in its own right. Can we impose on it the framework of our ordinary language categories? Even if they fit because it is a domain of ordinary experience, why should they be derived from analysis of ordinary uses elsewhere, rather than from its own experience? And why cannot its own experience be used to correct and revise run-of-the-mill ordinary language, precisely

because education too is happening in the common ordinary life? Analytic philosophy and analytic philosophy of education have scarcely begun to explore the assumptions inherent in their partnership.

The division into types of learning we have looked at above, as an analytic product, started in Gilbert Ryle's well-known separation of *knowing how* from *knowing that,* in his *The Concept of Mind.*[6] Ryle was primarily attacking the intellectualistic language as set in the dualist philosophy – the intellectualist legend that doing something is first to do a bit of theory and then to do a bit of practice (p. 29). Actually, it seems to me, Ryle was waging a battle in a series of strategically superb stages. One step is to distinguish knowing how from knowing that – in short to rescue practice from the intellectualist grip. Paradoxically, this may enshrine the separation in types of knowledge, itself a residual dualism. The next step is to give primacy to the practical: efficient practice precedes the theory of it (p. 30), and even the competence to apply theory must be present first (p. 31). Understanding too is a part of knowing how – the knowledge it requires is simply some degree of competence in performances of that kind (p. 54). When doing has thus been safely ensconced in primacy and has had most of the book to show its capacities, the final attack on the enemy is launched (chapter IX, 'The Intellect'). This interesting chapter is in effect a massive reduction of theorizing to the activity of teaching: 'Having a theory involves being able to deliver lessons or refresher-lessons in it' (p. 286). Unfortunately some teaching is like spectator sport rather than participant athletics. Ryle says: 'Had arithmetic and chess been brought into the curriculum before geometry and formal logic, theorizing work might have been likened to the execution of calculations and gambits instead of to the struggle for a bench from which the blackboard call be clearly seen. We might have formed the habit of talking of inference in the vocabulary of the football field instead of in that of the grandstand, and we should have thought of the rules of logic rather as licenses to make inferences than as licenses to concur in them' (p. 306).

Now there is a great deal in all of this that is of interest to education. It reminds one of the case method in legal education. It is suggestive of the questions long debated in educational theory about the best ways of learning specific subject-matters – whether by relation to practical activities and cultural interests, or in a pure symbolic manipulation. It suggests also the psychological– educational inquiries into rote-learning and insight learning. It suggests, again, the issues in the history of science teaching – how far success is achieved, and at what stages of schooling, by exposition of formulae and systems of laws, by student participation in experiments, by retracing the history of science in careful studies of problems and the way they were solved. No doubt, it will suggest many other educational problems as well. But the last thing I think it should have suggested is the distinction of knowing into a set of types certified by ordinary language and amplified by appeal to linguistic counter-instances.

Even when this became the setting of the problem in analytic philosophy of education, and progress was made, it seems to me to have come from letting the lessons of educational

experience break in – even if only surreptitiously – upon the analytic process. Let me illustrate this briefly from one of the very able articles that made a contribution to the development of the topic of modes of knowing – Professor Jane Martin's 'On the Reduction of "Knowing That" to "Knowing How".'[7]

Martin, after expounding Ryle's basic distinction, considers an attempt by Hartland-Swann to reduce 'knowing that' to 'knowing how.' This, she says, rests on regarding 'know' as a dispositional term; thus to 'know that' is to 'know how' to answer questions about the material involved. Martin objects that even if such a reduction is carried out, the newly expanded category of 'knowing how' requires a distinction within itself based on the fact that two very different sorts of dispositions are involved. Suppose, she says, Jones witnessed the murder of Y. Jones accordingly knows that X murdered Y and knows how to answer the question 'Who murdered Y?' But such a capacity is essentially different from Jones knowing how to swim or to speak French. Martin suggests a feature to explain this 'intuitively obvious' essential difference. It is that the one set of capacities had to be learned *through practice*; learning to answer the question about the murder did not require practice.

Martin offers considerable discussion of alleged counter-instances and ends with a distinction of several types of 'knowing how.' One implies that the capacity has been learned through practice, and a second does not. My interest is not in the types, but in questioning why she introduced the distinction, between what is learned by practice and what is not, as intuitively essential. There are, after all, so many distinctions that might compete for essentiality between knowing how to answer questions and knowing how to swim. For example, one involves talking, the other does not; but this may be ruled out because she coupled 'knowing French' with swimming. Why is the division not made between acts that involve communication and acts that one can do alone? Thus knowing French goes with knowing how to answer questions, as against swimming. I need not labor the point, or raise difficulties about the fact that the child learns to answer questions by practice in human communication, though he need not practice each answer; nor again that he can learn one activity without practice if he knows another activity (e.g., to run a motor boat if he can drive a car). Surely what is happening is that it is intuitively essential to Martin the educator to consider the difference between what requires practice and what does not because that is a vital lesson from the experience of learning and teaching. Here Martin the analyst profits from Martin the educator and the analytic products are steered precisely along those distinctions that are important to educational experience. Martin is less applying analytic distinctions than setting them up to be useful to what the lessons of educational experience have shown to be important.[8] And I am inclined to think that this is precisely the way in which analytic products come about. There must always be some purposive context that calls the tune.

Let me give another example of the way in which Professor Martin's sensitive combination of her double role is philosophically profitable. In a paper on 'Basic Actions and Education,'[9] she examines the controversy over the idea of a basic action in the

currently fashionable theory of action. She starts out to see how the theory that has been built up about basic actions may help the theory of learning, and she reckons with the analytic works of Vesey and Melden and Danto on this question. But gradually Martin the educator begins to call the tune. The distinction between doings to which a person attends and devotes effort and those doings to which he does not attend and does not direct effort – that is, the educationally relevant distinction – takes over. Not only is the idea of a basic action relativized (or rather, contextualized), but the normative question for education is raised, 'whether we want whatever it is that a person is learning how to do to be learned as a basic action or not.' In the progress of the investigation from this point of view she has been led to question the analytic distinction of bodily movements and actions, to find a halfway house in some phenomena and to wonder whether the whole framework is not shaky.

Note the implications of such a study. It calls for a two-way interaction of educational problems and experience and analytic process and products. It does show the operation of the educational purpose in the type of analytic product that emerges. But it does not simply make action theory dance to the educational tune. For action theory is a meeting place of other interests as well – legal and moral, for example – and so the analyst in considering action should be listening to many tunes, and his products, when tried out in any *one* field, in effect are bringing models from other fields. The analytic philosopher could be the integrator of wide areas of human thought and effort, if he kept open his sensitivity to them instead of isolating his craft in a misguided conception of analytic autonomy. (He might also be the inventor of new models and new distinctions to be tried out in specific areas.)

Now what would a full-scale investigation of the distinction between knowing that and knowing how involve? Let me suggest a few lines of inquiry for the philosopher of education, concerning (1) the socio-historical stage of development of education as all institution, (2) the underlying psychology of human action as it affects educational theory, and (3) the kind of linguistic–philosophic inquiry that may be relevant.

1 To what extent has the distinction of knowing that and knowing how been written large in the development of educational institutions? I think, for example, of the difference between academic and vocational high schools – say, in New York in the 1930s. One was directed to the kind of learning that got one college entrance, the other to having skills that might get one a job. This is surely knowing that and knowing how, roughened and magnified. Of course one could point out that many of those in colleges ended up in professional work (engineering, teaching, etc.) that gave one a know-how; and the vocational schools thoroughly impoverished the preparation of their pupils in knowing how, because they had dilapidated old-fashioned machinery discarded from manufacturing. In any case there were no jobs in the 1930s, till we moved from a depression economy to a war economy that needed skills. I leave it to the philosophers of education – especially those who may have had teaching experience in these schools – to expound the evils that the separation gave rise to. Impressionistically, I recall the repeated demands and

arguments for a comprehensive high school on the ground that the separation impoverished both. Similarly, I recall the writings in vocational psychology that worked hard to show how intelligence enters into skilled labor and urged intellectually-minded students not to scorn those areas as against the then over-crowded professions. Maybe the distinction between knowing that and knowing how draws the line at the wrong point. It might be drawn instead between enlightened action (professional and skilled labor) and unenlightened action. (But this might be socially temporary, for unskilled labor is being automated anyhow.) Think of how much Marx inveighed against the massive social dichotomy of brain and brawn as an exploitative set-up.

The fact is that the more complex production becomes the more the integration proceeds. I recall in the early 1940s, when the Board of Regents of New York State proposed a set of Institutes for post-high school education which would combine technical and liberal education in something like what is now the partially technical community college, opinion in the labor movement was at first very suspicious of the proposal. There were fears that on the one hand it might bring a free flow of non-unionized cheap labor into the market (memories of depression and unemployment were still strong) and on the other hand that is was short-changing the workers who wanted an education. In Rylean language they might have said: if you want to know that, go to liberal arts college; if you want to know how, join the union as an apprentice. To meet the situation a gathering of top labor leaders was addressed by the State Commissioner of Education. I recall the skilful way in which he explained how the growth of complexity and the rapidity of technical change was making a basic education in science more and more necessary for actual work – down to the care and running of a diesel engine. In a way, it was parallel to the situation that had prompted Robert Hutchins, as dean of the Yale Law School in the earlier 1930s, to demand basic education in the law school: the New Deal was sweeping away old laws so rapidly that a law student who studied in the old way would graduate with a knowledge no longer relevant to the laws on the books. But whereas Hutchins advocated a basic education in terms of a classical conception of mind and man, the break-down of the liberal–vocational distinction called for an integration in which in the long run the dichotomy of enlightened and unenlightened action would become the central one. That such movements have advanced in the contemporary world is evident in the increased role of basic research in relation to productive effort. In the long run, it is the whole dichotomy of theory and practice that is being brought under scrutiny.

All this, you may be tempted to say, is interesting reminiscence. But has it anything more than the association of ideas to do with Ryle's distinction? I think it has. It suggests that Ryle's dichotomy, like all dichotomies, is attuned to particular phenomena that give it relevance, whereas in an extended view its severe limitations may become evident. It holds for a limited domain of ordinary activity in which there is sufficient actual (that is, practical) separation of thinking and doing to keep the distinction relatively useful. Look at Ryle's examples of know-how: we ride bicycles and play chess and talk French. We do not operate control stations at London airport or break codes or build translation

machines. If the distinction of knowing that and knowing how remains in the more complex situation, it is only the survival of the distinction between planning and carrying out plans, or it is an invocation of the 'intuitive' element in synthesis or diagnosis or skill. I am not proposing to reduce action to thought as Plotinus reduced production to reason, so that even the creation of the world was an overflow of reason! I am rather suggesting that what has been called knowing how is a very gross phenomenon, perhaps insufficiently understood, which will not support very precise categorical distinctions. I would not dream of denying that there is some distinction in some contexts, just as I would not obliterate the difference between studying the nature of love and falling in love.

In short, the examination of the institutional embodiments of comparable dichotomies, in their social context and historical relations, suggests that the Rylean distinction holds only within the limited domain in which an apprenticeship system is possible. As a distinction of types of knowledge it is parasitical on the distinction between abstract form and existent instance, planning and carrying out plans, studying and feeling, and a number of others. The educators should then start at the other end and study where apprenticeship learning is possible – not merely the plumber's apprentice, but also the politician's apprentice and the doctor's internship. To make the dichotomy an initial hardened distinction analytically certifiable and coercive on education may be just as much an ideology as Michael Oakeshott's attack on reason in politics in his conservative defense of an aristocracy brought up to rule.[10]

Please note that I am not assuming I have the answer to this type of inquiry into the institutional–historical dimensions of the dichotomy. The inquiry has still to be carried out.

2 A second line of inquiry would look to the underlying psychology of human action. I can indicate this briefly by reference. Ryle's distinction is involved, as we saw, in rejecting a dualistic theory of mind. But may it not, in spite of itself, enshrine a dualistic cut between the sensory–cognitive and the motor? At least a very famous reconstruction of the reflex arc concept long ago[11] suggested that the separation of stimulus and response, or of stimulus, central process, and response, retained the older dualisms that were ostensibly rejected. If, as Dewey argued, the stimulus at any point already is different in the light of the previous response which has changed its meaning, and the present response is an effort of reconstruction in the co-ordination of the total situation, can the dichotomy be much larger than between habit smoothly functioning and habit that involves reflection? It is interesting to note that in his *Human Nature and Conduct,*[12] precisely after he attacked the isolated ethereal view of knowledge and even went so far as to say 'concrete habits do all the perceiving, recognizing, imagining, recalling, judging, conceiving and reasoning that is done,' he rejected *knowing how* as knowledge. We may, he said, be said to know how by means of our habits; but this is knowledge only by courtesy. 'Or, if we choose to call it knowledge – and no one has the right to issue an ukase to the contrary – then other things also called knowledge, knowledge *of* and *about* things, knowledge *that*

things are thus and so, knowledge that involves reflection and conscious appreciation, remains of a different sort, unaccounted for and undescribed.' And significantly, in presenting the account of the difference – that the more efficient a habit is the more unconsciously it operates, while 'a hitch in its workings occasions emotion and provokes thought' – he returned to the central picture of the basic thesis of the old article on the reflex arc.[13] I cannot pursue this further here, but it suggests that no dichotomy of the Rylean type be admitted as more than a rough ordinary relative distinction – that is, be made the basis of educational theory – unless it makes clear its psychology of the sensor–motor relations.

3 It is also clear that the linguistic inquiry involved in this analysis is too limited, in at least several respects.

a Its range of expressions involving 'know' that can generate proposed distinctions is too narrow. I need not recapitulate the further distinctions that have developed, as indicated in Soltis's paper discussed above. There are wholly different paths. Aristotle distinguished between knowing that and knowing why. His 'that' was differently cut, in that it was limited to the isolated fact as against the explanatory reason. Philosophy of science has developed the whole notion of the relative distinction between description and explanation, or between a descriptive account and a systematic account. This is, of course, highly relevant to educational ideas of explaining and understanding. Again, the difference between 'knowing John' and 'knowing about John' or 'knowing the job' and 'knowing about the job' might support the sort of distinction Russell made at one time between *knowledge by acquaintance* and *knowledge by description,*[14] in which the former involved immediacy of presentation. But it might also support a quite different distinction such as William James made[15] between *knowledge of acquaintance* and *knowledge about,* in which the extent of the knowledge is contrasted (mere acquaintance *v.* the inner nature of the things). James added that one cannot impart acquaintance with things as one can knowledge about them. But fundamentally he was thinking of the contrast of the relatively simple thought with the articulate and explicit. It is interesting to note the contemporary reversal in ordinary use. To be acquainted with something is almost 'really' to know it, while to know about it may be just what we got from hearsay (or book reviews instead of reading the book). But perhaps the significant differences may lie in what is known. Thus there are tremendous differences between 'knowing John' and 'knowing arithmetic' or 'knowing the town,' in none of which any preposition or conjunctive adverb intervenes. While a Bergson might elaborate a distinction between *outer* and *inner* knowledge (scientific *v.* metaphysical),[16] a Martin Buber would make the cut between persons and things – *thou-knowledge* and *it-knowledge.*[17] And what educator in these days of alienation and bureaucratic manipulation would dare deny the significance of this distinction for educational work!

b The linquistic inquiry has not focused sharply enough on whether the cutting line is drawn through 'know' (by distinguishing meanings) or through the difference of preposition and conjunctive adverb or through the type of object. It has thus not been sufficiently aware of the relativity of cuts and the options involved. Thus in the biblical formulation, when David knows Bathsheba and when he knows the strength of his enemies, it is the different sense of 'know' that bears the burden of distinction (carnal, informational or experiential). When we know how, how to, of, about, where, etc., the line of difference is drawn by the preposition or conjunctive adverb attached to the 'know.' When the object takes over the work of distinction, it cannot be a wholly linguistic inquiry. We must have in mind some set of object-types. An interesting example is to be found in R.S. Peters's recent suggestion[18] that the knowledge of what is good is different from either 'knowing how' or 'knowing that' since, as Socrates and Plato argued, it is intimately connected with caring about something (p. 8). If we develop this suggestion, it would seem that to 'know the fact,' 'know the job,' and 'know the good,' would be distinguished by category-words such as FACT, TASK, VALUE. Perhaps to 'know what's up' or 'know what's going on' might add EXPLANATION.

c A third shortcoming would be insufficient attention to perspective. Most of the types of knowledge are looked at as attained states of a person. Educationally, they are thus either what the teacher has and is offering to the pupil, or they are what the pupil has when learning is complete. The transition from types of knowledge to types of learning is thus not an automatic one, and the types of learning as a process may be quite different from the types of end-products in learning. Types of learning may furnish some of the ideals for the end-product. But in some cases the end may supervene on very different procedures. Learning may depend in part on the tone of voice of the teacher or the demanding or accepting atmosphere of the classroom, neither of which is reflected in the product. Nor is it possible to regard every feature in learning as itself embodying a further end to be learned. For while there is what Gregory Bateson has called 'deutero-learning' – the child learns in the same situation permissiveness as well as reading – whether permissiveness is to be subsequently redressed is a separate question. The process may be rationalized in the way in which a reading-readiness program concentrates on the separate skills and conditions that when put together will be requisite for reading. But rationalization may not be wholly complete, and means and ends not always congruent.

In general, knowledge is the teacher perspective – he has it. Learning is the underdog view. A shift in emphasis from teaching to learning today is a social shift, quite comparable to the pressure for participation in politics. (It is suggestive, too, that responsiblity for the pupil's not learning seems to be shifting from the pupil to the teacher.) J.S. Mill said in his essay 'On Genius'[19] that the end of education is not to teach but to fit the mind for learning under its own consciousness and observation; that we have occasion for these powers under varying circumstances for which no routine or rule of thumb can possibly make provision. For educational purposes the linguistic analysis might better be directed

to the uses of 'learn'; and in the educational situation directly, not by new hardened distinctions between 'learning with,' 'learning from,' 'learning by'! The approach from learning would certainly take better account of the situation in higher education where the teacher Socratizes, or where a discussion is begun in a field in which a teacher does not know the outcome, but is bringing analytical skill and educational experience to a seminar in which all, himself included, may learn.

IV How then does one decide which analysis is correct? How Peters II corrects Peters I

I have tried to show the genuine complexity involved in the analysis of 'knowing that' and 'knowing how' and to suggest the way in which empirical and scientific considerations and historical stages of social life and human and educational purposes play an integral part in the very process of analysis. They are not simply added at the end. I would now like to return to the soft spot in analytic method mentioned as the central symptom at the outset, and see how an analysis may be judged for its adequacy. For this purpose I focus on Professor Peters's recent rich paper on 'Education and the Educated Man'[20] in which he revises his previous analysis of 'education.' I want to discern the way in which the revision takes place and why the resulting analysis is regarded as more adequate than the earlier. I should point out that I am not concerned with psychological or other causes in Peters – his shift is not like the old appeal from Philip drunk to Philip sober – but to the content of his analysis. And I choose it because Peters's general position seems here to be like Soltis's above – ready to go beyond analysis after the analysis is finished, but not apparently ready to admit that the beyond operates within the analysis.

Peters's earlier analysis of 'education' as developed in *Ethics and Education*[21] included: (1) the transmission of worthwhile activities to those who become committed to them, (2) some knowledge and understanding and cognitive perspective which is not inert, and (3) the exclusion of some procedures as lacking willingness and voluntariness on the part of the learner. This conception was criticized by some as being normative and laying down values of knowledge as against passivity. But in the familiar analytic fashion, it could be said that the values were packed away in linguistic uses of 'education.' The analyst need not advocate them any more than in, say, the analysis of the meaning of 'law and order' in familiar current use he need approve of the streak of violence he will find embedded there.

In the paper now under consideration Peters is troubled by counter-examples, especially by the use of 'education' for societies (his example is Spartan education) where the second condition of the three is not satisfied. He considers proposals to make the value condition (1) the sole one; thus any society could fill in its values for its educational system. And, on the other hand, he considers making the cognitive condition (2) the only one. He decides against both, and offers instead the distinction between

'education' and 'the educated man.' His older definition, in effect, had viewed education as the family of processes which contribute to the outcome of an educated man. By breaking the contention between the processes and the outcome he is able to accommodate the deviant uses of 'education.' It also helps resolve arguments concerning the first definition, which had centered on Peters's contention that we could not speak of the 'aims' of education; since education was initiation into worthwhile activities, it already had all the aims it needed. Now, with the separation of concepts, one could speak of aims with respect to education, but not with respect to the educated man.

This is a very bare outline. The full analysis involves constant resort to uses, to what would simplify and what would complicate the picture of uses, to counter-uses and objections. Now the question I want to consider in greater detail is what makes Peters's revised analysis better than his original analysis. What does he himself have to say, whether directly or in asides, on the question?

The chief passage treating of this is on pp. 12 and 13. Peters tells us that in his previous analysis he had always assumed the connection between 'education' and the development of an educated man. (Even where other people did not have this more differentiated conceptual structure, it was important to make the distinction.)

> But perhaps I did not appreciate how widespread the older use of 'education' is in which there is no such tight connection between various processes of bringing up and rearing and the development of an educated man. It may well be that many people still use the word 'education' to cover not only any process of instruction, training, etc. that goes on in schools but also less formalized child-rearing practices such as toilet-training, getting children to be clean and tidy, and to speak with a nice accent.

Actually, considerable historical examination of changing usage is associated with this confession. There has been an etymological digression in which we were told that the Latin 'educare' was once used for rearing plants and animals as well as children; and the English word in the seventeenth century covered animals, birds, and, in the nineteenth century, silk-worms. The use of 'education' for 'Spartan education' in which there is training without close connection with knowledge and understanding is put into such a category. In addition, there was a precursor ideal to the present educated man in the pre-nineteenth century notion of the cultivated person, who was the product of elaborate training and instruction. It was only with the coming of industrialism and the greater importance of knowledge and the development of schools that the association of knowledge with instruction became close. 'So close has this association become that it is now possible for some people, who do not value anything to do with books or theory, to say that they do not value education' (p. 13).

In short, Peters's old definition represented the outcome of an historical trend not

quite completed, and breaking the connection between 'education' and 'the educated man' helps to focus on the relation of the different elements and to understand the surviving uses that were puzzling.

I do not see why, to ensure the greater clarification, it is necessary to carry out a redefinition. The break in connection could be seen by showing that the earlier definition had such-and-such separate components related in such-and-such a way, presupposing such-and-such empirical connections; the historical–genetic reflections and reflections on people's values that enter the process could then be put into all explanatory preamble. Thus in the familiar example of the way in which 'conducting electricity' gets put into the definition of 'copper,' it is seen how copper was identified and defined before we knew anything about electricity and how the growth of the empirical connection and the increase of theory leads from turning what was an empirical generalization into a material leading principle, and formally when the theory becomes extensive and the feature involved significant enough, into part of the definition. In Peters's account the burden of clarification is borne by his historical–genetic–valuational account of the ways in which and grounds on which the usage changed. To put the results of such an account into the re-analysis and change the definition thus reflects some ground of decision on Peters's part, and it is this that I am trying to locate. It is not easy, so I shall probe in a few different ways.

First, though he seems to think of his second definition as more adequate than the first, he is not claiming, in the older analytic style, to be giving the 'correct use.' It is, in the distinction Ryle made between 'use' and 'usage,'[22] rather the usage that is involved – the actual incidence of employment of the term.

Second, Peters seems to feel he has to accommodate all the counter-examples, but not in a uniform way. There are analogical uses, secondary uses, by-paths, and so on. Some uses, significantly, have died out. Now in such accommodation there is considerable constructive activity on the part of the analyst. A use that is analogous or secondary is so only relative to a definitional use accepted as primary. If we reversed their roles the other would be secondary. Peters's struggles with 'Spartan education' illustrate this. Drop the knowledge condition for 'education' and the secondary use becomes an instance of the primary use. In fact, this stubborn example plays a large part in Peters's separation of education and the educated man. But if there is a constructive activity on the part of the analyst, there is some meta-analytical decision involved.

Third, the resort to historical explanation of counter-examples is not itself decisive of what will be done with the outcome. For example, there is the counter-example to including a value condition in 'education' that lies in many people's regarding being educated as a bad state (p. 9); people, they say, are better off without it. Peters identifies them as simple, hard-headed, practical men (p. 10). Presumably they are the relics of an earlier form of life suspicious of contemporary civilization. Their judgment that education is bad is a moral judgment directed on the values embedded in the definition. If the definition had no embedded values or left a value-variable to be filled in by each group-use, then they could not say that education is bad, they could only say that education is

misdirected in contemporary society or has to be tolerated for some of its instrumental effects. Having seen all this surely does not foreclose Peters's options. He could still have gone either way – to keep his old definition or to shift, as he does, to his new account. Neither would rob the simple practical men of their right of value criticism. They would have to express it in one case as a condemnation of education; in the other as a condemnation of modern life. If anything, the latter would be clearer – and that is a consequence of sticking to Peters's first definition. So there are gains and losses in clarity whichever way we go. Why rob Peters to pay Paul? Simply give an explanatory preamble and choose your path on *conscious and significant grounds*.

What then are significant grounds? Peters seems to be abandoning, as I suggested earlier, his old definition (let me call it E_1), which represents the outcome of an historical trend which has not quite been reached, for a definition (E_2) of two terms which leaves an empirical relation between their material content. So far as I can tell from the considerations I have given, it is because E2 better reflects the current state of usage. But if his historical analysis is correct, this current state is not likely to last. The forces of industrialism, the importance of knowledge, the use of formal schooling, are likely to become more effective. Some indeterminate time from now, an analyst with the same perspective as Peters in his revision may come to Peters's old definition as his answer! The present counter-examples may die and be neglected by him as Peters thrusts aside 'education' for training of animals (p. 13). If a present analytic answer represents all intellectual investment, does the analyst not want to be secure at least about the stability of the linguistic situation? Suppose it is likely to change in a decade? In a year? In a week? Tomorrow? Does it make no difference to him? Actually it does. In his rating of counter-uses, he may sift dying uses which are no longer vital, analogous uses that were once on an older outlook thought continuous, and so on. Having used historical grounds for explaining minor corrections in present use, he might as well expand his historical judgments as a basis for distinguishing more significant from less significant uses. And having seen this integral role of historical factors in the fashioning of his analytical product he might as well recognize the purposive and valuational components that operate both in history and in their own right in the analytic process.

Along these lines, Peters's first definition may be reconstrued as follows: begin with a preamble, giving the kind of historical information Peters invokes in the paper about industrialism and the growing stress on knowledge. Estimate the extent and strength of the trends and analyze the vital conflicts as they affect the lives of men; for example, the forces of corporatism that make them passive organization men and the pressure of problems that require active participation and inventiveness. Add the kinds of ethical considerations Peters holds to about worthwhile activities, as explicit ethical views. Add the picture of the current state of linguistic usage and the historical and value roots, and whatever coalescences and fissions are taking place. Then, propose the definition as expressive of historical–valuational–linguistic grounds, showing how far it represents trends or resistance to trends, possible solutions to problems, and so on. Why then not

tie together, as Peters's former definition did, worthwhileness and knowledge and creative activity in one bundle, setting a goal for our social and educational development in the conditions of the contemporary world, genuinely fitting at our present stage of knowledge and social development? How timorous by comparison is a definition attuned to the condemnations of relics of an earlier society, or permissions to speak of 'Spartan education' in an anthropologically neutral way, which anthropologists do not need from philosophers anyhow to carry on their profession! Whatever clarity there is in the second definition about corrections could have been achieved in a richer type of analysis of the first definition.

I hope in this appeal from Peters II to Peters I, I shall not have both Peters set against me. Let me by way of caution add a linguistic ground for my position. If we examine fully the contexts in which 'education' is employed in the modern world, I think it becomes clear that it is often a policy-setting word, or an institution-shaping word. In this respect it is like 'freedom' or 'morality.' Even terms like 'science' or 'family' carry this aspect, though in subtler shades. To include or exclude grandparents in the definition of 'the family' is to take a stand on the institutional shaping, and to make obligations either an inner matter or an outside matter in a fashion quite parallel to what Peters has argued about education. So too the terms 'education' and 'educational activities' function in discourse that determines policy in the schools. Think of the long history of controversy over extension of the curriculum in the United States, in which additions were popularly branded as not education but simply 'fads and frills.' For in the system in which the concepts are involved – I need scarcely remind philosophers, at this stage, that concepts do not stand alone – if an activity is not educational, it does not belong in the schools. You can expect a teacher to keep class records because it is part of the educational job, but you cannot expect him or her to sweep the floor and tend the stove, as in the old one-room school house; that is custodial labor. Soon, too, keeping records may be certified as 'clerical' and come under another jurisdiction. With the growing use of paraprofessionals, we may expect more rather than fewer distinctions. Major questions of policy are likely to be settled under the definition of 'educational activity,' as major questions of the American way of life have been settled under the analysis of 'due process.' To take one example, Peters in his *Ethics and Education* points out that the question may significantly be raised whether teaching belongs in a university. In the United States, the more likely question arising is whether research belongs in the college. Both require for their understanding long historical–valuational explanation. But the solution is rather likely to take the form of what educational contribution the faculty's engaging in research makes in the college – as against having separate research institutes. If we recognize the policy-determining and institution-shaping function of discourse about 'education' and 'educational activity,' it becomes necessary to track down the components that shape the outcome and the values embedded therein.

An afterthought: this should not be construed as an appeal for a persuasive use of analysis. I have no objection to this being frankly done in its own terms. For example, I

might urge the old use of 'education' to cover plants, on the ground that it might suggest a good botany class in the early elementary school, in which children could be teacher-apprentices, and the plants be pupils (perhaps on a Buberite approach). But to see my argument in this light is to misunderstand and misrepresent it. Peters in adding a reflection on the limitation and point of analysis paraphrases Wittgenstein: 'conceptual analysis leaves everything as it is.' That is, the ethical and social decisions are separate and come after the analysis is completed. I have been arguing that they are integral to the analysis at the points of choice throughout, together with the empirical, scientific, and historical considerations.

V Concluding notes

I have tried to show the following. There is dissatisfaction in the philosophy of education with the current form of the analytic approach. Some of the analysts are themselves unhappy, professors as well as students. The source of the trouble lies in a weakness, in current analytic method itself, which purports to exclude empirical, valuational and socio-historical components. These cannot be added successfully after the analysis is over – this yields an unsatisfactory half-way house. Such components play a role in the analysis itself, surreptitious if not recognized; they determine in part the shape of analytic products. If you ask what analysis looks like when this is recognized and these components integrated, I am tempted by the way Richard Robinson, in his book *Definition,*[23] characterized one type as 'any process, whether verbal or otherwise, by which any individual, whether God or angel or man or beast, brings any individual, whether himself or another, to know the meaning of any elementary symbol. . . .' Let me say then that analysis is any way which God or angel or man or beast can devise to make clearer the conceptual instruments one is using and the processes of using them in specific materials, and to dig out the presuppositions in the questions asked, and the problems and purposes involved, so as to be able to refine and improve them in the light of the stage reached by mankind in its total development of life and society.

I do not mean in such a definition to disparage linguistic sophistication, but rather to put language in its human relations. When words are dynamite, it is because of what human beings and milieu are like at the time. When Peters says casually (p. 10) that a non-value use of 'education' would be treating it, 'as indeed it is sometimes called, the "knowledge industry",' I cannot help remembering the explosion set off in California by Clark Kerr's reference to the 'knowledge industry' in his *The Uses of the University.*[24] To the Berkeley students the comparison of knowledge production today to the railroad industry in the nineteenth century and its role in American development meant accepting the purposes of the establishment and the alienation of students!

If there is doubt and controversy about 'education' today, it is because the concept of education, like most traditional concepts, is itself cracking. Uses are altering and new concepts are in the making because human history and institutions and social life and

values are at a point of extremely rapid change and are likely to issue in great creation or great destruction. If philosophical analysis is to be helpful to education today, it must be the sort that is responsive to the problems of education in this rapidly changing world, that will realize the constructive task of fashioning intellectual instruments for dealing with these problems. It cannot limit itself to current uses and even to current problems within education, for the relations of this institutional complex to the whole of the social milieu are being transformed. Education as we have known it as an institution may be breaking up and being realigned in myriad ways. It is no longer clear that *any* domain will keep the shape and isolated problems and isolated concepts that it has had. A constructive philosophical analysis will not sit passively by waiting for something to consolidate either institutional or linguistic form to be retrospectively dissected. Both the owl of Minerva and whatever glottal deities there may be have work to do before the dusk. Philosophy of education today has to use whatever resources it can muster to clarify and cope with the way in which the major problems of men today are impinging on the present state of educational policies, programs, and institutions. Formidable as this task sounds, it can be quite concrete and quite philosophical even though the philosopher will not usually be able to go it alone. But the fact is that in no field of policy or practice today can any professional go it alone without distorting the results.

Such a philosophical analysis in education which involves cooperation with empirical and scientific studies, with historical analysis of development, and with systematic analysis of trends and possibilities, may indeed seem overwhelming. But what other path is possible for a philosophy that can respect its work and win the respect of its students? It may withdraw from the field, of course, finding it too complex, as Plato withdrew from physics, finding nature too Heraclitean – and then proceeded to fashion physical myths! It may, instead, content itself with constructing general schemata, indicating in detail the kinds of blanks that will be filled by empirical knowledge, and the kind by value-determinations. This at least will have the virtue of noting what is needed, instead of making a virtue of ignoring it. But if it gives up both retreat and the hope of all-comprehensive schemes, it may find a host of problems in the actual contexts of today's education which the philosopher can tackle in cooperation with other professionals – the scientists, the historians, the experienced educators – without pretending to more than his philosophical skills.

Such problems may take different shape. One is, for example, the problem of *consistency,* surely a philosophical specialty. Every educational establishment has programs set in objectives and traditional ways of running itself. There are always, and especially in a complex changing society, inconsistencies between different objectives, different programs and policies, different ways of running the school, and among those several categories as well. There are, for example, contradictions between democratic objectives and bureaucratic modes of organization, as well as authoritarian discipline; between equalitarian aspirations and textbook materials and teacher attitudes to disadvantaged and minority groups; between cooperative objectives and competitive

methods; and so on. The general search for consistency of educational functioning is certainly an area in which analytical and logical skills should enable the philosopher of education to initiate and explore, even if he will need sociological and psychological support in tracing the unintended consequences of policies, programs and procedures.

Another area of problems concerns the 'external' relations of education to the rest of society. Current demands for community control and current charges from the student left that the universities are instruments of the establishment show vividly the pressing need for an understanding of educational institutions in light of a total analysis of the society rather than simply in terms of a limited set of traditional objectives as the 'essence' of education. Philosophy has worked a greal deal on the logic of the relation of parts and wholes, philosophy of history and society on the concept of institutions and the relation of goals, rules and practices to underlying social aims, conflicts and conditions. Both phenomenological and analytical skills are needed to recast our very way of looking at the schools in order to see them in the diversity of perspectives that constitute the contemporary community and to prepare the ground for vital normative judgments that reflect the total historical situation of our age.

Another type of philosophical skill is to discern the reach of a principle over diverse subject matter. When it becomes a pressing necessity in the contemporary world that an objective be given a central place in education, such philosophical aptitudes have a special responsibility. Thus it is agreed that the schools should play an important part in education for peace. The perfunctory educational tendency would be to add a peace-course or at best even a peace-department. A philosophical analysis would be required to see the reach of peace education throughout the whole curriculum – what elements in teaching of geography, language, history, economics and so on, what attitudes in teaching and administration, what traditional modes of thought and feeling, and presuppositions about human nature, had built-in war and violence proclivities. The philosophical analyst cannot alone answer either the descriptive or the normative questions but he is sophisticated enough to realize that the answers depend to a marked degree on the kinds of questions asked and the scope of the issues attended to. What I have said about education for peace here holds in an even more complicated way for recent controversies over the place of Black, Puerto Rican, Mexican-American, or in general third-world studies. I have not seen – though I may have missed – serious contributions to the *analysis* of such issues in the philosophy of education.

In general, with so much of education today ripe for major reconstruction, philosophy is in the best position to raise the questions concretely – though not always to give the answers – about hardened categories and modes of organization of studies on all levels of the schools. I have suggested above that discussions of types of knowledge may be a pale reflection of such problems and issues. To bring such discussion into relation with the underlying problems is not to dismiss it but to call for its fuller consideration directly and consciously. To take an example of shifting categories from higher education, think of the experiments over the last few decades in combined courses: unified social science

courses, contemporary civilization courses, humanities courses, and so on. In these there have been theoretical justifications in terms of inherent unity, simplicity and convenience, least-common-denominator acquaintance, etc. Given all the work that philosophy has done on the division of knowledge into fields and the relative character of the joints in the fabric of knowledge, and how different schemes of the sciences and fields of knowledge have been hardened into schemes of levels of reality, it seems incredible that philosophy of education has not pressed for reform, at least imparting the lesson of contextual relevance to basic categories and divisions in the structuring of education.

Obviously the listing of philosophical tasks could go on endlessly. I conclude with a comment on the notion of *relevance,* so frequently invoked by students today in educational controversy. Too often, it seems to me, it is analytically disparaged as a vague slogan term, and the philosophical analysis is directed to proving its ambiguity. That it is contextually differentiated is clear enough. Sometimes it indicates instrumental importance, sometimes the general sense of 'meaningful' in which the older philosophers debated whether life had a meaning, sometimes it refers to pertinence in solving basic social problems. But it also most of the time refers to pertinence in *understanding* what is going on in a full philosophical sense. I cannot see how the philosophy of education could fail to find both the use and misuse of the notion to be other than the symptom of a growing questioning in education and the occasion for encouraging critical discussion and cultivating insight. An analytical philosophy of education could take hold of this situation in the comprehensive questioning of all life and its organization in that same spirit in which philosophy generally and perennially praises its origins in the Socratic quest.

Notes

1. In this paper I am dealing primarily with the one type of analysis because it is predominant in contemporary philosophy of education. There is, of course, a great deal of analytic work to which my diagnosis may apply only in part.
2. It was the picture of the state of the field emerging in this conference that stimulated the reflections of this paper.
3. J.L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words,* J.O. Urmson (ed.), New York, OUP, 1965, Lecture XI, esp. pp. 141f. Cf. his remarks on the true/false fetish and the value/fact fetish, p. 150.
4. Professor Soltis's paper was presented to the Conference on 'New Directions in Philosophy of Education,' held at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), 30 April–2 May 1970.
5. Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions,* University of Chicago Press, 1962.
6. Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind,* Hutchinson, 1949.
7. Jane Roland Martin, 'On the Reduction of "Knowing That" to "Knowing How"', in

Language and Concepts in Education, B.O. Smith and R.H. Ennis (eds), Chicago, Rand McNally, 1961, pp. 59–71. This paper was included by the editors as an example of educationally relevant analysis that exhibits a kinship to the work of Oxford analysts.

8. Professor Martin may not realize the extent of this penetration of educational experience into the analytic work. In the last part of the paper, she examines implications for teaching and learning on the assumption that 'One test for the utility of our classification lies in its relevance to education,' as if it had been independently established.

9. Presented at the OISE Conference; see note 4.

10. Michael Oakeshott, 'Rationalism in Politics', in *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays,* New York, Basic Books, 1962.

11. John Dewey, 'The Reflex Arc Concept in Psychology', *The Psychological Review,* July 1896, pp. 357–70. Reprinted in *John Dewey: Philosophy, Psychology and Social Practice,* S. Ratner (ed.), New York, Capricorn Books, 1963.

12. John Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct,* New York, The Modern Library, 1930, pp. 177–8.

13. Ibid., pp. 179–80.

14. Bertrand Russell, 'Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description', in *Mysticism and Logic,* New York, W.W. Norton, 1929.

15. William James, *The Principles of Psychology,* New York, Henry Holt, 1890, vol. I, pp. 221f.

16. Henri Bergson, *An Introduction to Metaphysics,* trans. T.E. Hulme, New York, Liberal Arts Press, 1949.

17. Martin Buber, *I and Thou,* trans. Ronald Gregor Smith, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1937.

18. R.S. Peters, 'Education and the Educated Man', *The Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain, Proceedings of the Annual Conference,* vol. IV, p. 8.

19. J.S. Mill, 'On Genius', in *Mill's Essays on Literature and Society,* J. Schneewind (ed.), New York, Collier Books, 1965, p. 101.

20. See note 18.

21. R.S. Peters, *Ethics and Education,* Allen & Unwin, 1966, ch. I.

22. Gilbert Ryle, 'Ordinary Language', *The Philosophical Review,* vol. LXII, 1953, pp. 167–86.

23. Richard Robinson, *Definition,* Clarendon Press, 1954, p. 27. The reference is to 'word-thing definition.'

24. Clark Kerr, *The Uses of the University,* New York, Harper Torchbooks, 1966.

3

THE REVOLUTIONS IN ENGLISH PHILOSOPHY AND PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

Peter Gilroy

> I had been examining Pyle's innocent question . . . . It belonged to a psychological world of great simplicity where you . . . meant what your father meant by the same words.
>
> (Green 1955: p. 90)

The claim that English philosophy has undergone a revolution during this century is a platitude. However, the fact that fundamental aspects of the 'new' philosophy were subject to criticism and modification drastic enough to constitute a second revolution seems to have been ignored or misunderstood by some. English philosophers of education are particularly at fault here, and this in spite of the fact that the second revolution contains important implications for the scope and nature of their subject.

I The first revolution

To begin with it should be made clear that the first revolution in philosophy was not a radical rejection of *all* that had gone before, only a rejection of those philosophers whose work was 'ambitiously metaphysical' in the sense that they were attempting to discover 'striking and important conclusions about the universe as a whole, about Reality . . . in its ultimate nature' (Warnock 1958: p. 2). Idealist philosophers such as Hegel and Bradley found no problem in claiming that our common-sense knowledge of the world was, in some sense, false (*cf.* Bradley 1893: p. 9), and, constructing complex metaphysical systems to account for our ordinary knowledge, in effect translated common-sense knowledge into the language of their system. The leaders of the first revolution, Moore and Russell, reversed this procedure, taking common-sense knowledge as their base and then trying to see why the Idealists' conclusions ran counter to common sense, usually by showing

that their arguments were muddled, confused and so on. The revolution, then, was firmly based on the traditional British Empiricist view of philosophy, the definitive statement of the position being:

> It is ambitious enough to be employed as an under-labourer in clearing ground a little, and removing some of the rubbish that lies in the way to knowledge; which certainly had been very much more advanced in the world, if the endeavours of ingenious and industrious men had not been much cumbered with the learned but frivolous use of uncouth, affected, or unintelligible terms.
>
> <div align="right">(Locke 1690: pp. 58–9)</div>

This kind of analysis, however, although primarily concerned with clarifying others' uses of terms, was not at first solely a second-order, parasitic, discipline, because both Moore and Russell felt that the result of such analysis was to identify units of meaning which were themselves incapable of further analysis (Moore 1903: pp. 8–10). These units (or atoms) of meaning provided the requisite connection between communication and what we are communicating about, between language and reality. At this point, of course, questions about the nature of reality intrude again, and so some form of metaphysics is still being accepted as part and parcel of philosophical enquiry. In fact it shares with its Idealist predecessor the problem of running counter to common sense, for its atoms of meaning represent the fragile point at which language and reality meet, the one representing the other, and so they cannot be verbalized (they are, by definition, non-verbal). Thus Russell is led to say, somewhat mischievously, that 'the point of philosophy is to start with something so simple as not to seem worth stating, and to end with something so paradoxical that no one will believe it' (Russell 1918: p. 193), and later to distinguish what he has to say about proper names from ordinary use (*ibid.*: p. 201). The point is that this kind of analysis is still metaphysical and does not necessarily accept common-sense knowledge as the final court of appeal in philosophical debate. In addition it should be noted that, although it does deal with language, its emphasis on a reduction of meaning to atoms through philosophical analysis suggests that an appropriate title for the position would be reductive (and not simply linguistic) analysis.

Eventually, however, the search for these essences of meaning came to have less and less importance and an emphasis was laid on clarity and on the second-order nature of philosophical enquiry. Thus one commentator was led to observe that it is now 'generally agreed that the proper concern of philosophy is with concepts' (Warnock *op. cit.*: p. 109), and a popularizer of the subject to say of such work that it consists 'mainly in a vast number of small articles minutely considering a few uses of some single concept' (Mehta 1963: p. 91), hence conceptual analysis. Linguistic analysis is, then, the general term for much of the methodology of the first revolution in twentieth-century English philosophy and contains within it a shift of emphasis from reductive to conceptual analysis, from a

search for units of meaning to an identification of the meaning of particular concepts.

Those familiar with English philosophy of education as it is at present practised should be able to see immediate links with what has just been described. The reaction here was not against Idealism but against philosophy of education conceived of as a simple description of certain thinkers' ideas on education, philosophy as history so to speak. The first indication of this revolution occurred during the Second World War and consisted of the application of the 'new' philosophy's logical rigour to the ideas of the 'great thinkers' so as to ensure 'that no ambiguity may be allowed to flourish undiscovered' (Hardie 1942: p. xix). There were no longer to be uncriticized paintings of 'suggestive but vague portraits' (Scheffler 1960: p. 7) of the educational universe, the new criticism proceeding through the use of linguistic analysis. Peters deliberately echoes Locke's words to stress this point when, speaking of 'the uncultivated field of the philosophy of education', he says that linguistic analysis 'may help to clear away some of the rubble which has prevented many clear-cut furrows being driven through this field in the past' (Peters 1966a: p. 88). The vagueness inherent in the general term 'linguistic analysis' is seemingly avoided in his *Ethics and Education,* where he again begins by castigating the old-style philosophy of education as 'undifferentiated mush' (Peters 1966b: p. 7) which will be rejected in favour of the view of the philosopher as an under-labourer involved in a second-order enquiry. Linguistic analysis would seem, then, to mean conceptual analysis, and it does, he says, three things:

1. makes explicit the presuppositions of language users;
2. examines their consistency;
3. searches for criteria to assess these presuppositions.

This last is all-important, for he believes that 'the search for such criteria is the kernel of philosophical inquiry' (*ibid.*: p. 16).

Although, as will be indicated, there have been some changes in the detail of this position as it tried to incorporate the arguments of various critics (or, as I would prefer to argue, as it tried to accommodate itself to changes brought about by the second philosophical revolution), I think it fair to say that this general description of its main task remains constant (*cf.* Hirst and Peters 1970: pp. 2–12). Moreover, it is no exaggeration of Peters' influence and importance to say that this view of the nature and scope of the philosophy of education was and is dominant (Torrance 1974: p. 24), such that English philosophy of education has come to be seen as synonymous with Peters' conception of the subject, which is, in turn, related to a particular view of philosophy *per se.* But, if it is correct to argue that 'philosophy of education should be a branch of philosophy proper and should be in close touch with developments within it' (Warnock 1973: p. 2), then it is clear that this is no longer the case. Indeed, it is possible to argue that the mis-match between philosophy and philosophy of education occurred even earlier than the sixties.

II The second revolution

As before it should not be thought that the use of the term 'revolution' necessarily implies a total and immediate rejection of all that had gone before, although the sixties seems to have been a period when such change occurred comparatively quickly within philosophy of education. As far as philosophy itself was concerned the methodology of linguistic analysis gradually began to be seen to bring with it considerable difficulties, some of these being identified by the original revolutionaries themselves. Obviously, to analyze the meaning of a particular linguistic expression only produces other linguistic expressions, which will in turn require analysis, thus producing a regress of analysis. As mentioned earlier, Russell prevented this becoming an infinite regression by arguing that there was a point at which the analysis of language struck the reality which language purported to refer to, so producing reductive analysis. Wittgenstein, although not Russell, realized this meant that, paradoxically, such analysis was verbalizing a non-verbalizable 'reality' to explain how linguistic expressions had meaning, but at first left this problem unresolved (Wittgenstein 1921). Russell, however, recognized that there were some expressions (such as hypothetical statements of the form, 'If it were to rain you would get wet', and negations like, 'There is nothing here' or 'Atlantis never existed') which have meaning and yet explicitly deny the existence of a physical reality to give them sense. This did not, of course, lead Russell to reject his version of linguistic analysis (see, for example, the complex ways in which he tries to show that such expressions *do* connect with an existing reality (Russell 1905)), but it does show that even in its earliest days the first revolution was facing difficulties which prevented it running as smoothly as one might think.

These difficulties began to be voiced by others struggling to operate within the new tradition, as a brief examination of even a few of the publications preceding Peters' *Ethics and Education* shows. Thus Ayer rejected reductive analysis' acceptance of atoms of meaning as being 'a senseless metaphysical conception' (Ayer 1933: p. 2) and Price criticized linguistic analysis viewed as conceptual analysis, arguing 'we shall only succeed in being clear at the expense of being superficial; and in our zeal to "disinfect" our language from muddles, we shall only succeed in sterilizing it' (Price 1945: pp. 40–1). In the same year Popper criticized such analysis as being 'itself the main source of vagueness, ambiguity and confusion' (Popper 1945: p. 19), and a few years later the point was made that 'the rejection of the master-scientist conception of the philosopher need not, and should not, lead to the under-labourer conception' (Winch 1958: pp. 10–11). The 'genuine revolution' for Winch was the recognition that to study language was to study 'the nature of man's understanding of reality' (*ibid.*: p. 40), so introducing as a legitimate and inevitable area of philosophical study the 'general principles, in accordance with which people do in fact think and behave in their everyday life' (Broad 1958: p. 67). Philosophy conceived of as being part and parcel of sociology was also argued for by Gellner, who produced a scathing criticism of the whole enterprise of linguistic analysis as being of a 'notorious triviality' (Gellner 1959: p. 246). At this time Hampshire and Strawson published books which were avowedly metaphysical, using as their data language so as to describe, rather than merely speculate about, the presuppositions language-users have of their world. Such work was praised by, of all people, Ayer, who in 1950 had produced what has been called 'a last-ditch defense'

of reductive analysis (Hamlyn 1970: p. 38), but ten years later gave an Inaugural Lecture which one commentator claims 'contains the best critique of linguistic philosophy that I have found' (Mundle 1970: p. 5).

Thus the existence, some six years before the publication of *Ethics and Education,* of a groundswell of discontent with the view of philosophy as being either reductive or merely second-order, parasitic on other disciplines and primarily concerned with clarity, seems obvious and the tension of change which identifies the second revolution is particularly marked in Ayer's work. By the end of the sixties one of the 'fundamental questions of philosophy' was the analysis of linguistic analysis (Körner 1969: pp. 25ff) and there was sufficient work being generated to justify the launching in 1970 of a new philosophical journal, *Metaphilosophy,* its title being defined as 'the investigation of the nature of philosophy' (Lazerowitz 1970: p. 91). Indeed 1970 could well be identified as the point at which the philosophical position of the second revolution became, for some, more common-place than revolutionary, with Hudson seeing nothing strange in beginning a work on ethics with chapters on meaning theory (Hudson 1970), and the first revolution in philosophy dismissed 'as one of the most curious curios in the history of ideas' (Mundle, *op. cit.*: p. 263).

This, however, is merely an overview intended to substantiate the point that by the sixties linguistic analysis was no longer dominating English philosophy. What need to be established now are the reasons advanced to reject it, and this is best done by examining certain aspects of the work of the philosopher whose name is conspicuous by its absence in the preceding overview, Ludwig Wittgenstein.

Wittgenstein is often taken as the father-figure of linguistic analysis (Gellner, Mehta, Mundle, *op. cit.*), but this is to ignore the fact that, although he once was clearly happy to accept reductive analysis, his rejection of it involved a rejection of conceptual analysis too and thus of linguistic analysis *per se.* It is perhaps an indication not only of the ambiguity of the term 'linguistic analysis' but also of much of his later work that he should be so classified, for 'whatever he may be, the later Wittgenstein is no longer an *analytic* philosopher' (Fann 1969: p. 62): he is in fact better seen as the Lenin of the second revolution.

A philosophical 'school' can often be identified by its theory of meaning, in that a radical alteration of a philosopher's account of how language has meaning has a 'knock-on' effect upon other aspects of his philosophical position, in particular his theory of knowledge. This was certainly the case with Wittgenstein. As indicated earlier, in common with Moore and Russell, he had once thought that language had meaning by being related, via linguistic (or logical) atoms of meaning, to the non-linguistic world. Knowledge thus consisted of a seemingly straightforward correspondence between knowledge-statements and the world itself, and so a statement such as, 'Aristotle was once the teacher of Alexander' has meaning because it corresponds to what were once two related objects in the world.

Under various pressures, and in particular the problem of accounting for the wealth of

counter-examples to this thesis (see especially Malcolm 1958: p. 69), he came to see that this simple, unitary, once-and-for-all account of how language had meaning did not do justice to the complexities of actual practice. His attack on essentialism, on the view that there is one essential way in which language has meaning, and, at the particular level, upon the view that individual words or concepts have an essential meaning, represents the very heart of the second revolution in philosophy, a point well made by Pitcher:

> One form of the craving for unity, then, is a craving for essences, and it is so strong that we tend to assume that everything actually has an essence . . . . Whereas philosophers have traditionally looked for sameness and unity, Wittgenstein looks for difference and multiplicity.
>
> (Pitcher 1964: p. 217)

The attack proceeds through the use of a stream of examples (Wittgenstein 1953, §10ff) which make the point that the way in which language means cannot be pinned down with a particular theory of meaning but, like a blob of mercury, is in continuous movement. We can recognize this fact by looking and seeing how a term is used, by locating it within the social context which gives it its meaning for a particular group, in a particular time and place. One example from the many makes the point well, in that 'game' can sometimes be used to refer to an activity between two or more people, but sometimes also to just what one person does, sometimes to refer to something which is competitive and deadly serious and sometimes to an activity which is neither of these things. It is the particularization of meanings which prevents one identifying the essential meaning of 'game' without first locating it within a particular context. This introduction of the social aspect of meaning brings philosophy very much down to earth, in that the subject can no longer treat meanings as essential 'somethings' but as actual practices (*ibid.*: §23 and §27). Moreover, as the social context is often taken for granted by those communicating within it, by identifying the meanings of terms the philosopher is attempting to reach 'the aspects of things that are most important for us . . . hidden because of their simplicity and familiarity' (*ibid.*: §129), which he had earlier referred to as the 'tacit conventions on which the understanding of everyday language depends' (Wittgenstein 1921: 4.002). So if meanings are to be identified by looking at the actual use made of the various terms under consideration then, on this account, such an identification eventually makes explicit or implicit reference to the presuppositions of a particular social context, the elucidation of which is part and parcel of the philosopher's task. The danger of an infinite regression of analysis is therefore recognized and the regression halted not, as before, at atoms of meaning, but within a particular social context.

This account of meaning had an important effect on many areas of philosophy, but one of immediate relevance to this paper's concern is the so-called Criterion Doctrine, 'the view that the applicability of a term must be based on the satisfaction of certain conditions' (Richman 1965: p. 66). There is an enormous literature on this area (see Kenny 1967: pp.

258–61) which falls roughly into one of two camps. There are those who argue that the criterion for a term inevitably gives you the meaning of the term, and for them the meaning of, for example, 'tree' would be identified by reference to various criteria such as 'large plant', 'wooden', 'having branches'. If all these criteria are satisfied then you are using 'tree' correctly, as the criteria represent logically necessary and sufficient conditions for the application of the term 'tree' (Hacker 1972: p. 258). Others argue that Wittgenstein's meaning theory makes it clear that this is rarely the case, that meanings are rarely to be identified in this tight, rigidly structured way (except for analytic expressions such as 'All bachelors are unmarried men', where one expression is defined by the other and where, of course, nothing new is said), and that if we look and see we will not find logical necessities of meaning but 'unnerving contingencies' (Albritton 1959: p. 250). This second interpretation makes it clear that the connection between a criterion and what it is a criterion for is a conventional one and can change drastically. To continue with the previous example, 'tree' can mean other things depending on the context of a particular use and so the term can be correctly used with two, one or none of the previous criteria being satisfied (Canfield 1974b).

Once again Wittgenstein's meaning theory can be seen as criticizing a basic assumption of one form of linguistic analysis, that clear analysis somehow gets to all essence of meaning:

> Wittgenstein's conclusion . . . undercuts a very long philosophical tradition . . . accepted . . . by those analytic philosophers who aim only at stating precisely the necessary and sufficient conditions for the application of some linguistic expression. To have challenged this assumption . . . is surely a major contribution to the progress of philosophy.
>
> (Wellman 1962: p. 163)

Of course, if there *were* such essences of meaning identifiable by criteria seen as logically necessary and sufficient conditions, then philosophical conclusions would consist of little more than sets of criteria. It would not be possible to use the oldest tool of philosophy, argument by counter-example, to criticize these conclusions because, for such philosophers, 'it is pointless to attempt to cite counter-instances, since there are none' (Richman 1965: p. 70). So if one offered up as a possible counter-example to the view that the meaning of 'tree' is to be identified by the three criteria suggested earlier the fact that the term can be used as a verb to mean 'cornered' then, by definition, as the new use does not satisfy the criteria, it is not appropriate (it is either incorrect or not part of the essential meaning). The certainties offered by such a view of criteria are replaced by Wittgenstein's view founded, as it is, on actual use which would allow for as many uses as meaningful (that is, operative) examples.

Such an account of philosophy has received a variety of names, functional analysis (in that it analyses the functions of terms), cluster analysis (in that it identifies clusters of

meanings rather than one, essential meaning) and relativism (as meanings are relative to social contexts). However, the emphasis it gives to the multiplicity of social contexts and meanings suggests that a better term to describe the second revolution's philosophy is pluralism. Its revolt against *a priori* linguistics, against the view that 'certain fundamental features of our own conceptual systems are necessities of language' (Ayer 1960: p. 33) and that philosophers can legislate for correct use even when their legislation runs counter to such use (*cf.* Hampshire 1950: p. 241), rescues the philosopher from 'persuading himself that he is expounding the true, proper or correct meaning of the words in question . . . (and so giving) arbitrary and unsought directions on how . . . to use them' (Heath 1952: p. 191). This aspect of pluralism produces an important implication for another traditional argument used by philosophers, the transcendental deduction, so called because the conclusions of such an argument, although *deduced* from a particular context, are supposed to *transcend* that context. This move is very like induction in science, jumping from particular observations to general conclusions, and has been the subject of lively debate amongst philosophers, but a pluralist would obviously wish to discard such arguments as their transcendental nature takes them beyond any context and so beyond meaning, which is why their conclusions have been called 'nonsense' and 'empty' (Hamlyn, *op. cit.*: p. 75). The problem is well brought out by Körner, who has argued that transcendental deductions are impossible because 'the defect of all transcendental arguments is their failure to provide a uniqueness-proof, i.e. the demonstration that the categorical framework is universal' (Körner 1970: p. 72). This is because on the one hand the deduction is based firmly on a particular context, and on the other wants to go beyond that context, this last move having no obvious justification. They are indeed 'quite paradoxical things' (Taylor 1978: p. 165) and for that reason are to be resisted, so, although discussion of the nature of categorial frameworks (what were earlier called presuppositions or tacit conventions) is part of the pluralist's task, he has no way of judging between them to produce a set of presuppositions which have to be assumed by all social contexts. Even if there exists a set of universal context-free presuppositions where justification ends, it would be, by definition, beyond our context-dependent knowledge, as we would have neither the language to grasp it nor the language to express it.

It would be wrong to assume from what has been argued that the second revolution in philosophy has been accepted by all (see, for example, Trigg, 1973), and even in an area where pluralism seems particularly appropriate some still resist the idea that ethical positions depend for their meaning on particular social contexts (Swinburne 1976). Acceptance of one philosophical position over another involves comparing them with the facts they purport to describe whilst also ensuring that they are internally consistent, and on these grounds pluralism seems to score over the various types of linguistic analysis and their predecessors. By attacking the problem of meaning directly the pluralist revolution has produced the following position. Clarity is important, but 'there can be no point in trying to be more precise than our problem demands. Linguistic precision is a phantom' (Popper 1960: p. 28) because there are few, if any, universal, essential meanings.

Consequently the attempt to identify them by the use of criteria is 'futile' (Canfield 1974a: p. 315) and as 'no transcendental deductions can be successful' (Körner 1967: p. 317) they cannot be identified in this way either. Philosophical enquiry, then, is no longer either reductive or merely second-order but is in a sense the queen of the social sciences, synthesizing the work of subjects such as sociology, social psychology and anthropology so as to get to grips with problems concerning the nature of particular groups' presuppositions. This reintroduces metaphysics to philosophy, but a metaphysics which attempts to *describe* what is assumed by certain groups' language use, rather than merely *speculating* about the nature of such assumptions, in a vacuum so to speak – hence Strawsons' distinction between descriptive and speculative metaphysics (Strawson 1959: p. 9). Language, now viewed as being 'systematically ambiguous' (Winch, *op. cit.*: p. 18), replaces the earlier perception of it as being based at some point on unambiguous certainties. Thus the search for indubitable certainties and rejection of alternatives becomes an acceptance of a plurality of contexts, meanings, knowledge and values and a rejection of universal certitudes.

Given this position I now need to relate the dominant school of English philosophy of education to it. At this point I am not concerned with the detail of this philosophy of education's particular analyses but rather with how, as a general philosophical position, it compares with the kind of philosophy I have identified as pluralism. At present there seems to be a certain fragmentation of the subject as, for example, phenomenological and Marxist approaches to philosophy of education begin to be published, but it still seems to be the case that 'one fairly uniform account' retains its dominance (Hartnett and Naish 1976: p. 140). Professor Peters' work is a useful source of that account and will be used as such, but I would also want to direct what follows at many other philosophers of education, most of whom have never published and who accept Peters' work as providing, in some sense, the standard against which their subject is to be identified (*cf. ibid.*: p. 146).

Given what has already been said about the first revolution it might seem odd to look at Peters' work again in the context of the second revolution. However, there are two reasons for doing so. The first is to stress the differences between the dominant school of philosophy of education and pluralism; the second to point out that on a closer examination pluralism has not gone entirely unnoticed, by Peters and Hirst at least.

One of Peters' earliest publications in the field of philosophical psychology makes it quite clear that he accepts some form of Wittgenstein's pluralist theory of meaning. Discussing actions and explanations he emphasizes, correctly I think, that 'man is a rule-following animal' (Peters 1958: p. 5) and that these rules are specific to particular societies, so philosophy, anthropology and sociology come together here to work on the concept of motivation (*ibid.*: p. 156). He also criticizes certain psychologists for their 'cavalier attitude towards ordinary speech' (*ibid.*: p. 154) and so, although he does not say so explicitly, he does seem to be working firmly within the tradition of the second revolution.

This view of his approach to philosophy is reinforced a year later when the importance of recognizing the variety of social contexts is again stressed. The reader is warned that 'it

is idle . . . to insist that one way of using . . . words is alone correct' (Benn and Peters 1959: p. 14) and that:

> The meaning of a word is inseparable from the variety of contexts in which it is used. To treat one property as 'essential' . . . would be to make one context a standard for all contexts.
>
> (*ibid.*: p. 58)

Peters, then, does seem well aware of the second revolution's meaning theory, and makes use of its conclusions in his work. It comes as something of a shock, therefore, to read his Inaugural Lecture. Here one might expect the pluralist aspects of his early work to be made relevant to educational problems but, although he does say that he intends to avoid the charge of essentialism by relating his analysis to various contexts (as it 'would be objectionable . . . to suppose that certain characteristics could be regarded as essential irrespective of context' (Peters 1963: p. 89)) he continues by flying in the face of what he accepted before. Through analysis he intends to present 'three essential criteria of education' (*ibid.*: p. 103) which constitute an 'explication of its essence' (*ibid.*: p. 90), and the relevance of the social context within which terms have meaning is rejected out of hand, as the three essential criteria are 'impersonal standards' (*ibid.*: p. 104). In addition to this reductionism, the second-order nature of philosophy is also stressed, 'for though a philosopher might concern himself with the general conditions necessary for the application of a concept, it is an empirical question to determine to what extent such conditions are actually realized' (*ibid.*: p. 108), which also hints at the possibility that a philosopher's conclusions might have little or no relation to actual practice. So the analysis of a concept like education is, paradoxically, supposed to begin by looking at the various ways of using the concept and yet will produce conclusions which are not necessarily related to such use. Moreover, the view of analysis as a 'mapping' (Peters 1965: p. 1) suggests that there is some fixed essence of meaning which the philosopher as cartographer can uncover and then judge use by, a view which Peters had earlier rejected.

The full flowering of this approach was seen in 1966. Again he begins by acknowledging the importance of the social context, as questions do not 'arise in a social vacuum' (Peters, 1966b, p. 16) and the meanings of terms like 'education' are context-dependent, citing Wittgenstein as support here (*ibid.*: p. 23). Yet, although criteria are 'like a guide to the customs of a people' (*ibid.*: p. 247), which is to accept Wittgenstein's criticism of the Criterion Doctrine and so is straightforwardly pluralistic, he continues by claiming that criteria are in fact the way in which 'the central cases of "education"' (*ibid.*: p. 41) are to be identified, its evaluative aspect in particular being 'a matter of logical necessity' (*ibid.*: p. 91) and so not tied to particular contexts. The free-floating, formal nature of this approach is again made clear when dealing with the problem of the justification of various social principles which give meaning to the evaluative aspects of 'education', for Peters claims that there are certain principles which presuppose any reasoned discourse and where

justification ends (*ibid.*: p. 165), these being identified by means of a transcendental deduction.

A series of criticisms followed, many of them being, so to speak, internal, in that the critics accepted this way of philosophizing but simply wished various other uses to be taken notice of (for example, Earwaker 1973: p. 246). Such criticism, as has already been noted in philosophy proper, can easily be met by either altering the criteria slightly (*cf.* Hirst and Peters 1970: pp. 20–5) or by simply pointing out that the so-called counter-examples are either 'peripheral usages' of the term under consideration (Peters 1966b: p. 24) or simply dismissed as not relevant (*ibid.*. p. 37). As the standard against which central use or relevance is to be judged is the very criterion being criticized, then a vicious circularity intrudes here, and so critics who accept the Criterion Doctrine as philosophy's methodology have failed to grasp that such acceptance means that an analysis which is not self-contradictory cannot be criticized by the use of counter-examples (Fitzgibbons 1975: p. 96). The seemingly watertight nature of the argument has produced some virulent criticism (see Adelstein 1971), and even the suggestion that what goes on in schools and this kind of philosophy of education are, perhaps, distinct, so philosophy of education could be left to soldier on with its narrow concerns whilst a new, 'wider' philosophy of *schooling* could be developed (Barrow 1981: pp. 26–7). However, what needs to be seen, as was shown in philosophy *per se* is that essentialism is suspect and that the position itself requires criticism, which is, of course, to introduce metaphilosophy to philosophy of education. As has already been shown three basic assumptions of the subject have long since been discredited.

Criteria

The criteria are usually taken as being context-specific, so identifying the criteria for a term does no more than say that in *this* context it is used in *this* way. Peters *et al.* pay lip-service to this view, but then proceed to identify criteria which are purely formal from contexts which are not and so assume 'a much greater . . . conceptual uniformity among human beings than has been empirically justified' (Nidditch 1973: p. 240). This approach presupposes the validity of a particular meaning theory.

Meaning theory

Hirst deals explicitly with this area, arguing that meanings are use-dependent (Hirst 1966: p. 75). But the pluralist implications of this view, that meanings are 'precariously fixed' (Popper 1955: p. 279), are resisted in favour of the thesis that underlying the myriad different usages of various terms there are essential meanings to be uncovered by analysis (and this in spite of the use he makes of Wittgenstein's pluralism). This kind of analysis is obviously reductive and the regress of analysis is halted not, as before, at linguistic atoms of meaning but at essences identified as being the 'central use' of the term under consideration, justified by being related to

a context-free value system through the use of a transcendental deduction.

Transcendental deduction

Peters has said that this is the 'linch-pin' (Peters 1966b: p. 165) of his work. Yet such an argument has been shown to be too weak to support the weight placed upon it and, indeed, Peters' use of it has recently been taken as a prime example of the 'total vacuousness' that a rigorous transcendental deduction must produce (Watt 1975: p. 45).

These three important mis-matches with the position of the second revolution in philosophy show that Peters *et al.* have failed to grasp the nettle of pluralism. In effect the theoretical underpinning of his work is suspect because a linguistic analysis involving some form of reductive analysis is self-contradictory, in that it purports to reduce evaluative concepts to non-evaluative, criteria-based, essences of meaning, where the one necessarily excludes the other (*cf.* Soltis 1971: p. 47).

Peters has, of course, replied to many of these criticisms and a certain tension becomes evident in his more recent work. Thus criticisms of his conception of a criterion (Thompson 1970; *cf.* Peters 1970) and of his transcendental deduction P.S. Wilson 1967; *cf.* Peters 1967) are met by being classed as 'misunderstandings' on the part of his critics. Under pressure from Woods and Dray, who criticized the nature of his analysis (Peters, Woods and Dray 1973) he reverts to his earlier, anti-essentialist, view of linguistic analysis (*ibid.*: p. 44, footnote 15, and p. 48) and, eventually, rather than attempt to analyze a concept like 'education' on its own he relates it to the concept of a person and, so one might think, to specific social groupings (Peters 1973: p. 138).

This last drift towards the pluralism of, for example, Dunlop (1970) and Langford (1973) is, however, halted. Earlier he had criticized Wittgenstein's work by seizing on the example which had been used to show the non-essential nature of many terms, 'game', arguing that there is a 'general principle' relating all uses of 'game', namely a 'necessary condition of calling something a game is, surely, that it must be an activity which is indulged in non-seriously' (Hirst and Peters 1970: p. 6), which is clearly making use of the very essentialism that Wittgenstein's game-anology was intended to counteract, as well as being a poor description of the actual usages of the term. Peters also seems to still accept the validity of transcendental deductions, as he is unhappy that value questions should be 'completely contingent' (Peters 1973: p. 145) and is prepared to talk of 'a sense of the universality of values' (Peters 1975a: p. 105) which 'structure the social context in which reason operates' (Peters 1975b: pp. 13–14), although how they are to be identified is left unclear.

Of course the published work of Peters *et al.* is not as empty of meaning as Watt suggests. By applying pluralist principles to that work it soon becomes obvious that, in spite of protestations to the contrary (Peters, Woods and Dray, *op. cit.*: p. 43), Peters is involved with what he calls prescriptions, what others call value-judgements. Given the

fact that language is located in a value-laden social context it inevitably follows that in analyzing educational language (for the pluralist at least) what Peters produces is, as he says himself, a description of 'more differentiated specific' concepts (Hirst and Peters 1970: p. 25) which not everyone necessarily uses or accepts (*ibid.*: p. 21). If this approach to analysis were followed through, then the second revolution in philosophy would impact on philosophy of education, and reductive analysis would be replaced with pluralism. Instead the search for presuppositions, which Peters earlier identified as one part of the role of philosophy, has become for many philosophers of education the search for ways of justifying one set of presuppositions (or meanings) over others. Such a search is without foundation, based, as it is, on a flawed theory of meaning.

An example makes the point. There is a well-known attempt to apply this kind of analysis to curriculum justification. Again, a thoroughgoing essentialism is used to produce 'a more ultimate basis for the values that should determine education' (Hirst 1965: this volume, p. 248). The argument proceeds with the aid of a transcendental deduction (the ultimate point where the question of justification 'ceases to be significantly applicable' (*ibid.*: p. 257)) to identify criteria which, in turn, identify the various forms of 'knowledge itself' (*ibid.*: p. 255). We are thus presented with a reductive analysis of language where meaning is reduced to end-points of knowledge. The usual attempts to criticize the position internally then follow with various other forms of knowledge being offered for inclusion in his original list of forms (Gribble 1970) and others suggested as being candidates for exclusion (Gribble 1974), but this kind of argument can make little impact. Instead an external attack on the whole essentialist, transcendental and criterial enterprise is required, in order to make it clear that these forms of knowledge are only one amongst a possible pluralism of knowledges (*cf.* Simons 1975). Once this is established a new series of practical questions can be brought forward for, if there is no 'basic' knowledge to be broken down into a series of forms, then the problem arises as to what knowledges there are and how we are to choose between competing knowledges, one such method recently offered being purely pragmatic (Warnock 1977: p. 164).

This brief example cannot do justice to the detail of Hirst's arguments, or to the fact that, with Peters, he feels a certain tension in his position (Hirst 1974: pp. 92–5), using as he does pluralists like Hamlyn and Körner to support his anti-pluralist position (although he does accept that Hamlyn at least might not accept the use made of his work (*ibid.*: p. 100, footnote 9)). However, it does give a reasonably clear indication of the way in which a pluralist philosophy of education would treat the problem of curriculum justification. It also indicates that a new set of problems arises, matched by those that the second revolution faces, namely what is to constitute a group, a discrete social context, and whether or not dominant sub-groups of a society have the right to impose their 'knowledge' on subservient groups, the educator as missionary so to speak (*cf.* Zec 1980 and Walkling 1980), or whether, as I would want to argue, there should be a plurality of curricula as is supposed to be provided for in English primary and secondary comprehensive schools. Thus from the ashes of the dominant school's curriculum justification based on 'sameness and unity'

there should grow an awareness of the importance for curriculum theorists of 'differences and multiplicity' (Pitcher, *op. cit.*).

It has been said of analytic philosophy of education that 'evidence for its decline continues to pile up' (Evers 1979: p. 1), but this is to overstate the case, as it seems remarkably resilient. It may or may not be true that school-teachers see it as irrelevant to their problems (Torrance, *op. cit.* and Hart 1976: p. 155), but it is unfair to single out philosophy of education in this way, as the same point could well be made, unfortunately, of much academic work in education (as some might say, 'philosophy and religion . . . what are they when the wind blows and the water gets up in lumps?' (Golding 1981: p. 16)). More to the point is the fact that the majority of philosophers have long since rejected the mix of reductive and conceptual analysis which at present identifies English philosophy of education, and this is perhaps one reason why the subject is seen by some as 'not a reputable area of concern for a philosopher' (Haack 1976: p. 159).

One can only assume that many philosophers of education are simply unaware of the full force of the arguments which support that rejection. Why else should Wilson, for example, talk about conceptual analysis as being 'the prevailing view of philosophy amongst philosophers' in such a way that he is led to castigate pluralists as having 'sold out to sociology and reneged on the whole notion of analytic truth' (Wilson 1979: p. 24)? This, of course, is doubly mistaken in that pluralists do not reject analytic truth and, secondly, if there is a 'prevailing view' of philosophy it is, I would suggest, pluralism. Indeed Wilson has recently been criticized, correctly I think, for having 'an impoverished view of meaning and language' (Snelders 1981: p. 22), a point that, as I have argued, could well be made against those who continue to offer work which accepts the Criterion Doctrine as being meaningful (for example, Fleming 1980). I would not want to appear to be rejecting an alternative methodology out of hand, especially as that methodology dominates my subject, but the position is at best suspect in that it makes explicit or implicit use of three kinds of arguments which are not and cannot be justified.

Popper makes the point that in the natural sciences essentialism 'has been dethroned' (Popper 1953: p. 173), although interestingly enough Peters seems to think otherwise as he claims that the 'search for laws in science is a search for assumptions that are true of past, present and future' (Peters 1975a: p. 105). I have tried to argue that in philosophy at least it has also been overthrown and that when Peters defends himself against Woods and Dray by saying that the philosophy of education 'needs a much more sophisticated notion of "meaning"' (Peters, Woods and Dray, *op. cit.*: p. 45, footnote 15) he has correctly identified the point at issue. That theory of meaning has been in existence for the last twenty-five years or so: it is time that the dominant philosophy of education took full cognizance of the fact and rejoined the mainstream of English philosophy.

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4

RICHARD PETERS: A PHILOSOPHER IN THE OLDER STYLE

R.K. Elliott

> Speaking with understanding they must hold fast to what is shared by all, as a city holds to its law, and even more firmly.
>
> *Heraclitus,* D.114

Richard Peters is widely regarded as an analytical philosopher, and, at least in the earlier days of his career as a philosopher of education, he seems to have seen himself in the same light. In his Inaugural Lecture *Education as Initiation* he writes:

> Philosophy . . . means different things to different people. To the general public it suggests directives for living derived from deep probings into and ponderings on the meaning of life: for the professional philosopher it consists in a rigorous exploration of questions to do with the disciplined demarcation of concepts and the patient explication of the grounds of knowledge.[1]

He says that his predecessor, Louis Arnaud Reid, a metaphysician and aesthetician, was sympathetic to the layman's view that the task of the philosopher is to provide some kind of synoptic directive for living, whereas he, Peters, was more concerned with becoming clear about relatively concrete issues. In comparison with Louis Reid, he says: 'I feel a very mundane fellow whose eyes are more likely to be fixed on the brass-tacks or under the teacher's desk than on the Form of the Good.'[2]

In the Introduction to *Ethics and Education* he says that professional philosophers are embarrassed by the layman's expectation of philosophy that it will provide high-level directives for education or for life: 'Indeed, one of their main preoccupations has been to lay bare such aristocratic pronouncements under the analytic guillotine.'[3] He goes on immediately to say that professional philosophers 'cast themselves in the more

mundane Lockian role of underlabourers in the garden of knowledge.' It seems that, from the professional point of view, pronouncements like Plato's account of the Good are fit only for the tumbril or the wheelbarrow, thence to the scaffold or the garden incinerator. Peters accurately describes attitudes which were prevalent in analytical philosophy at the time he was writing, but it is questionable whether he properly understood his own.

Peters has produced a substantial body of analytical work on relatively concrete issues, chiefly in philosophical psychology: his book *The Concept of Motivation,*[4] for example, and the seventeen papers which comprise the first two parts of his anthology *Psychology and Ethical Development.*[5] This hammering in of brass tacks, none of them too far from the teacher's desk, amounts to a distinguished contribution to contemporary 'professional' work in philosophical psychology, and I suspect that many would consider it to contain his best and keenest philosophizing. I would not say, however, that his chief contribution to philosophy of education is to be found either in his treatment of relatively concrete issues or in his use of the analytical method. It is located, rather, in his reflections on the general nature of education and its relation to very general questions concerning 'the human condition', the nature of truth, the meaning of 'God', and the nature of the world; and, against this metaphysical background, in his reaffirmation of the Stoic ideal as the most appropriate attitude to life. In short, his work is most memorable and most stimulating in so far as he philosophizes according to the layman's conception of philosophy, rather than the professional philosopher's.

In a review of *Ethics and Education,* quoted by Peters in the Preface to his anthology,[6] Abraham Edel suggested that Peters's thinking of himself as an analytical philosopher is one of the things which prevent him from properly understanding his own philosophical position. Peters replied that conceptual analysis is one philosophical instrument among others, and that its functions are strictly limited. He added that, in his opinion, whatever merits *Ethics and Education* may have, they derive more from his interest in psychology than his adherence to what Edel had called the 'British analytical school' – an opinion Edel would not have contested, since he had said as much himself. Edel had also asked whether Peters did not take his idea of what is worthwhile for granted, out of the Oxbridge educational tradition, without subjecting it to critical analysis, but this question did not attract Peters's serious attention. It seems that at the time of writing the Preface, in 1973, his self-understanding was no different than it had been when he wrote his Inaugural Lecture, and *Ethics and Education.* Yet the anthology contains 'Subjectivity and Standards'; and his Swarthmore Lecture had been delivered in 1972, and published the same year, in book form, under the title *Reason, Morality and Religion.*[7]

Neither of these works was written for a specialist audience of philosophers. 'Subjectivity and Standards' was a contribution to an interdisciplinary symposium about the role of the humanities in the universities.[8] The Swarthmore Lecture was delivered to a Quaker audience, and was offered, according to the terms of the Lectureship, as 'relating to the meaning and work of the Society of Friends.' Since both works were addressed to lay audiences Peters felt free to write them in a manner appropriate to laymen, rather

than in the 'rigorous' analytical manner. He describes the analytical method, with approval, in the opening paragraph of 'Subjectivity and Standards', but says that to do the analytical job properly would require a whole book, which 'would be somewhat remote from the spirit and concerns of this group'. He decides, quite deliberately, to employ a different manner of philosophizing:

> I therefore propose to attempt something more synthetic and hazardous, to revert perhaps to the older style of philosophy in trying to discern some more general attitudes to the human predicament which lie behind our approach to the humanities.[9]

The pieces in the 'older style' are not mere popular versions of things already worked out in the rigorous technical mode. The Swarthmore Lecture, in particular, is very impressive, not the greatest of Peters's works on education, perhaps, but the least dispensable. Together with 'Subjectivity and Standards', it presents a framework of fundamental beliefs into which the positions he takes up in his other educational writings fit. On some matters these works in 'the older style' provide clearer statements or firmer indications of Peters's opinion than are obtainable elsewhere. It would be too fanciful to think of them as containing Peters's 'esoteric' doctrines, but they do provide keys which make it possible to see his educational work as a coherent whole. It seems strange that contents of such importance should have been presented to non-specialist audiences, rather than to professional philosophers. No doubt Peters thought it unseemly to offer for professional attention works in which the views stated were not provided with the *quasi*-scientific proofs which the analytic movement demanded.

Peters's views in his later papers on liberal education and the justification of education are closely related to the general position he articulates in the Swarthmore Lecture and 'Subjectivity and Standards'. And, despite appearances to the contrary, his earlier writings purporting to analyse the concept of education also properly belong to his work in 'the older style'. Dray effectively makes this clear in his criticism of Peters's account of education in 'Aims of Education'.[10] Dray argued that although ostensibly analysing the way the word 'education' is ordinarily used, Peters was covertly prescribing what education should be. Peters seemed sensitive to Dray's criticism, and in 'Education and the Educated Man'[11] he made some changes in his account of education in the light of it, acknowledging that the word was used in a broader sense (as 'upbringing') as well as in the narrower 'liberal' sense (as 'development of knowledge and understanding'). This distinction did not motivate Peters to produce an adequate analysis of the concept, however. Instead, he pointed out that in professional circles (i.e. among teachers and other educationalists) the word is now used almost exclusively in the narrow sense; thereafter he proceeds as if the narrow sense is the only sense of the word which is of interest to a philosopher of education as such. This was a strange position for an analytical philosopher to adopt. The argument implied in what Peters says and does is analogous

to an argument that because professional psychologists agree in understanding 'mind' in terms of behaviour, the behaviourist sense is the only sense of the word which can possibly concern the philosophical psychologist.

The position Peters takes up in 'Education and the Educated Man' ought not to cause us surprise, however, because he had already adopted it, more explicitly, in his Inaugural Lecture. There he asks whether his decision to analyse the concept of education may not have put him on the way to essentialism, and replies that he does not much mind if it has.[12] He thinks that from the point of view of the teacher's task in the classroom education is essentially non-instrumental, an end in itself. The argument implicit here, also, is unsatisfactory, for any craftsman in his workshop sees what he is doing as an end in itself, in the sense that *qua* craftsman his overriding interest is simply in doing his job well, whether he be shoemaker, harness-maker, or whatever. Peters thinks that because teachers in practising their craft think of education as their *raison d'être,* and so as a final end for them, education is *essentially* an end in itself. The argument is no more deeply reflected than the argument from 'Education and the Educated Man', discussed above. Peters's declared intention is to clarify the concept of education, but he carries out this intention by articulating his preconception, rather than by seriously enquiring into the way the word is used.

In these early papers Peters does ask about the meanings of words, and so employs a method which can be called 'linguistic', and is broadly of the kind which is integral to the post-war 'conceptual analysis' associated with Oxford and the 'revolution in philosophy' to which Edel refers. There is little in common, however, between Peters and J.L. Austin. Austin used the linguistic method to create problems, which he then tried to solve by further analysis, and valued linguistic nuances as a means to deeper understanding. Peters uses it more to support positions he has adopted on other grounds.

It may look as if what he was doing in his early writings, when purporting to analyse the concept of education, was declaring his allegiance to a view of education (as non-instrumental) which was not in fact well supported by ordinary usage. It was a view which besides being central to the liberal tradition in educational thought, was fashionable among teachers and other educationists, not only in the classroom but in theoretical contexts also, and in public contexts generally. I do not think that he was actually making any such 'existential' commitment, since he does not give sufficiently clear indications of having been aware of what he was doing in that light. On the other hand, we have his declaration that he would not mind being an essentialist, and that is probably the best clue to what the basis of his view was, namely a supposed insight into the nature of education. Despite appearances to the contrary, in his early writings on the concept of education he was engaged not in philosophical analysis of the Oxford kind, but in philosophy of 'the older style' – hardly less so than in the Swarthmore Lecture or 'Subjectivity and Standards'.

In his reply to Edel, Peters intimated that the style of the 'British analytical movement', to which he thought of himself as belonging, was itself an older style of

philosophizing than that of the contemporary school of 'conceptual analysis' with which, Peters thought, Edel associated him. It is true that a good deal of Peters's work is analytical in the sense that it seeks to break up an idea or nature or phenomenon into parts in order to obtain a clearer understanding of it, without going any more closely into how the key words connected with the idea, etc. are ordinarily used than would have been done in traditional empirical philosophy. This earlier analytical style is not the 'older style' to which Peters refers in 'Subjectivity and Standards'. Philosophy in 'the older style' is synthetic, comprehensive, directive, concerned with matters of the highest generality and the highest importance, encompassing both a metaphysical 'world-view' and a philosophy of life. Plato's *Republic* exemplifies it.

Peters was influenced by other traditional philosophers besides the British Empiricists – by Plato, Aristotle, Spinoza, Kant and Hegel especially. Of these, Kant seems to have had the greatest influence upon his world-view. His work is post-Kantian, however, in its recognition of the social determinants of mind and knowledge. This makes a great difference. It does not affect Peters's belief that education is primarily for the sake of the individual, but it amounts to shifting the *epistemological* centre of gravity outside the individual soul. This shift is made with considerable rhetorical emphasis, but Peters does not provide it with an adequate rationale.

In the Inaugural Lecture he makes an obscure and implausible claim that the infant's possession of even an 'embryonic' mind depends on its initiation into public standards.[13] In *The Logic of Education* he contents himself with the (tautological) claim that objectivity becomes possible only when experience and thought involve concepts shared in a public world,[14] a claim which signals both lack of interest in the pre-objective and rejection of the subjective–relative. In 'Subjectivity and Standards', he suggests, again implausibly, that the fundamental principles of the various forms of knowledge were established by generalizing certain (active and passive) shared responses, such as the feeling of pleasure and the tendencies to assimilation and accommodation.[15] None of this takes him very far towards justifying the shift of epistemological emphasis from the individual to the public.

Although his writings contain original work in ethics and philosophical psychology, Peters's interest in epistemology and philosophy of language is slight in comparison. There is nothing in his work remotely resembling Wittgenstein's critique of the possibility of a private language, nor is there evidence of any close acquaintance with Wittgenstein's work, or of a general reliance upon him in which his general positions, or some of them, are taken for granted. Consequently, because of the great emphasis he places upon public standards, the notion of 'what is shared' acquires a character, in his work, rather like that of a fundamental principle in a metaphysical system.

Peters makes it clear in his Swarthmore Lecture that his philosophy of life is founded on the Stoic precept that one should remedy such ills as can be remedied and accept without complaint those which cannot.[16] More than this, his work is pervaded by Stoic moods, attitudes and values: individualism, for example, universalism, faith in truth and reason, respect for autonomy, distrust of utopianism, a keen sense of the human

predicament, compassionate detachment, the advocacy and practice of self-control, reverence for the world and for the individual experiencing it. What in Peters we superficially take to be Kantian is often more profoundly attributable to a temperament of the same general kind as Kant's, and to a mind which was nourished directly by the classical past.

His work also exhibits something akin to the dogmatism for which the Stoics were so persistently criticized by the Platonists in antiquity. Peters's educational thought is based on a group of principles which were foundations of Greek philosophical ethics at least from the time of Socrates. They are: (1) that there is a universal human good; (2) that the good for man is immanent in, not transcendent of, human life; (3) that it is immanent in the *individual* life; (4) that there is no separation between education and life, of which education is a part: in the process of obtaining the educational good the learner is already living the good life.

By keeping in mind how fundamental these principles are to Peters's thought, we can better understand some aspects of it which would otherwise seem strange. An example is his perfunctory treatment of Marxism. He criticizes Marxists on the ground that they lack a proper perspective on time, sacrificing the present to the future.[17] But intelligent and devoted furtherance of the Marxist end would normally satisfy all Peters's criteria for an activity's being worthwhile. It is not even true that satisfaction would be indefinitely postponed, since people normally derive satisfaction from achieving proximate ends, and there are plenty of intermediate stages along the way to working-class hegemony. As for proximate failures, and uncertainty about ultimate success, these are obstacles just as much for those engaged in theoretical pursuits, but are not considered prohibitive of human good to them. Peters's real objection to Marxism is that for Marxists the good of the individual is subordinate to a transcendent (collective) good. This subordination legitimates the suppression of diminution of individual good for the sake of the collective, and is fundamentally opposed to one of Peters's deepest beliefs. It is hard to grasp why such a comprehensible point of view should have been expressed in a way which seems to trivialize it; but Peters has, in effect, disguised his dogmatic individualism as a rational refusal arbitrarily to prefer one of the ecstasies of time to another. Unfortunately, this abstract argument lacks motivational force.[18]

In the following section I shall compare Peters's philosophy – in so far as it is a world-view and philosophy of life – with that of Heraclitus, not in order to establish direct influence (though there was some) but as an aid in constructing an exegesis of these aspects of Peters's philosophy, and in bringing out their 'older style'. Stoic philosophy is too voluminous and diverse to be easily put to the same uses, but I shall sometimes refer to it also. The Stoics were deeply indebted to Heraclitus, however, and comparison with him will bring out some of Peters's similarities with them. Heraclitus' work, though it concerns the individual, is addressed not to the individual himself, in the intimate manner of Epictetus or Marcus Aurelius, but to a more public audience ('society in general'), and this is the case also with Peters, though he has in mind, particularly,

those responsible for educating the young. Finally, Heraclitus' metaphysics, like Peters's, is only sketched: the greater elaboration of Stoic metaphysics makes it less useful for the purpose of elucidating Peters by comparison.

Heraclitus urges his hearers to 'hold fast to what is shared', the *logos*. A similar injunction lies at the heart of Peters's philosophy of education. Nothing is of greater importance, in his view, than that civilization should be preserved and enhanced. Civilization is constituted by language, within which 'forms of knowledge and understanding' like science, religion, etc. are 'more differentiated' developments. He stresses that learning 'the language and concepts of a people' is not just a matter of learning how to use words correctly:

> It is a grave error to regard the learning of a language as a purely instrumental matter, as a tool in the service of purposes, standards, feelings and beliefs. For in a language is distilled a view of the world which is constituted by them. In learning a language the individual is initiated into a public inheritance which his parents and teachers are inviting him to share.[19]

In his Inaugural Lecture he remarks that children 'start off in the position of the barbarian outside the gates',[20] and that the task of education is to get them on the inside of the activities and modes of thought and conduct which define a civilized form of life. He defends his use of the initiation analogy by saying that 'education consists in experienced persons turning the eye of others towards what is essentially independent of persons'[21] – not towards the Form of the Good, but the objects of the public world, and the objective realms correlated with the special languages of the forms of knowledge. Having objects of the various categories which belong to the public world, and to the special domains, as objects of one's consciousness – being intentionally related to them, in other words – is what Peters means by 'being on the inside' of language and the forms of knowledge. The same opinion, and even the image he uses, are found in Heraclitus: 'Eyes and ears are poor witnesses for men if their souls (*psychai*) do not understand the language' (literally, 'if they have barbarian souls').[22]

What we ordinarily think of as 'the language and concepts of a people' does not include the various specialized languages (of the sciences and humanities) to which Peters attaches such great educational importance. That the child's very humanity depends on his learning a native language is plausible, but the powerful arguments which can be employed to justify education at the primary level do not also justify initiation into the sciences and other academic disciplines.

Since Peters, in effect, defines democracy as a way of life in which differences on matters of policy are resolved by discussion, education as initiation can be seen to be essential for and conducive to the preservation of democracy, as he understands it. Learning

a native language involves, to some degree, the learning of 'morals' also, the fundamental principles of which are truth-telling, respect for persons, and impartial consideration of interests. Hence learning a shared language creates the possibility of a level of impersonality at which disputes can be settled by discussion without either party having merely to surrender its interests to the other.

Essential to moral arguments, Peters maintains, and indeed to rational discussion in general, is that the participants should abandon their egocentric perspectives and rise to the impersonal level of the universal. He believes that the greatest hindrance to this ascent are certain passions, like fear, anger and pride, which, when they are expressions of self-love, tend to install those who suffer them in narrow perspectives from which they tend to misunderstand the situations they are in, and are unable to recognize that other people's interests are as worthy of consideration as their own. He has a deep and painful sense of the danger inherent in unreflected passion. In his paper 'Education and Justification: a Reply'[23] he defends his conception of the educated man against the criticism that it is too limited to be inspiring as an educational ideal by expressing his conviction that in our society we are as far from achieving this limited and allegedly uninspiring ideal as England is from regaining the World Cup – a remark which owes its disturbing effectiveness not to the banal comparison but to the allusion it makes to football hooliganism, and through that to the whole violent tenor of the present age. Even more revealingly, in his Swarthmore Lecture he draws attention to: '. . . the awesome spectacle of human beings trying to make some sort of sense of the world and trying to sustain and cultivate a crust of civilization over the volcanic core of atavistic emotions'.[24] He seems here to be alluding to the threat of an outburst of passion on an enormous and terrifying scale. It would not be an exaggeration to say that in Peters's view the survival of humanity, as such, depends upon the general development of self-control, since the non-violent resolution of conflicts of interests depends on it.

Heraclitus asserts that *hybris* must be quenched quicker than a blazing fire,[25] his idea being that lawless violence is a threat to social unity and the common good.[26] He says that it is hard to fight against anger (*thymos*) because it 'buys whatever it wants at the expense of soul',[27] i.e. by carrying the individual away, to the detriment of his own life and the lives of others.[28] Both philosophers express the same abhorrence for practical wilfulness and recklessness, the ancient more fiercely, the modern more perturbedly, but who can wonder at that, granted the fearful predictions that seem so reasonable now?

For Heraclitus, 'what is shared' is not just language and the objective world it subtends, but also truth. Peters uses the expression 'forms of knowledge' advisedly, because, in his case also, what is shared, ideally, and what the parties in a rational discussion accept as their common aim, is truth. He recognizes that each form of knowledge could employ concepts different from those it actually does, but whatever concepts it uses, acceptance by its practitioners of propositions of the sort it seeks to establish rests upon the consonance of these propositions with what is given to sense; and what is given to sense is also, and necessarily, given in terms of whatever concepts are used. In 'Subjectivity

and Standards' he makes it clear that all the forms of knowledge are alike in this respect. They all rest upon an external 'given' which is received, in some conceptually organized form, by what Peters calls 'shared responses'. These include sense-perception, as we ordinarily understand it, but also the responses through or by which we recognize values in moral, aesthetic and religious contexts. These 'responses' are thought of as senses, or as close analogues of senses, and the relevant forms of knowledge as capable of formulating and establishing truths, or such close analogues to truths that it would be misleading to call them by any other name.

If morality, aesthetics and religion are inferior to science, which Peters regards as the paradigm of knowledge, it is not because they are not forms of knowledge at all, but because the special senses upon which they depend are not so reliable as the senses of sight and learning, on which science is able so predominantly to rely. This is why, in the Swarthmore Lecture, Peters says that he would feel nervous in the presence of people who had 'chosen' to think that suffering is bad or unfairness intolerable. At first sight, Peters's remark seems strange, for he had been saying that at some point in the regression upon principles we come down to considerations which are *not* chosen.[29] What he means, however, is that fundamental moral principles are not *normally* chosen; and the reason for the uneasiness he would feel in the presence of exceptional persons who have chosen them is that, in his view, these will be persons who lack moral sense. Similarly, a person who lacks a capacity for aesthetic response, and simply chooses what he will consider beautiful, is unlikely to inspire confidence among lovers of the arts. In the Preface to his anthology he remarks that in both morals and religion he remains 'unrepentantly a crude fellow', objecting to the contemporary tendency to side-track 'awkward questions about the truth of religious beliefs' by providing an analysis of the role of religious beliefs in the life of the believer.[30] In the Swarthmore Lecture he provides an account of the religious as a form of knowledge founded upon a religious sense (a sense of awe), which has as its appropriate objects such things as the human situation and the contingency of the world. Presumably, statements attributing substantial existence to a God or gods do not belong to the religious form of knowledge at all.

In *Ethics and Education* Peters says the 'attitude of passionate concern for truth' lies at the heart of any system that is based on discussion and argument.[31] In his Swarthmore Lecture he quotes with approval E.M. Forster: 'Yes, for we fight for more than Love or Pleasure: There is Truth. Truth counts. Truth does count.'[32] Earlier in the lecture, speaking in his own voice, he says:

> A man who uses his reason must feel, first of all, that he must get to the bottom of things; he wants to find out what is the case, what the right thing is to do or think . . . . Truth matters to him.[33]

These remarks would be misleading if we were to infer from them that Peters attaches any great educational importance to theoretical enquiry simply for its own sake. His

interest is primarily in the development of practical reason, only secondarily in theoretical studies, which are necessary to illuminate practical choice and, in general, to assist us in determining what to do. Consequently, the strong emphasis on enquiry – the *pursuit* of truth – which is so characteristic of Dewey, is replaced, in Peters, by an emphasis on *concern* for truth. Peters writes of this concern as 'passionate', but the epithet is descriptive rather than intensive. A person has concern for truth if he has passions such as love of clarity, consistency, order and precision, and hatred of their opposites. The fundamental passion is love of truth itself, but it is to be understood from the point of view of the individual in his practical situation. It does not include love of speculative thought, or theoretical study in general, or of any theoretical study simply as such.

Admittedly, in his early work Peters argued that a commitment to 'what is internal to worthwhile activities, be it the pursuit of truth for its own sake or the determination to make something of a fitting form'[34] is a necessary condition of being educated; and he tended to confuse pursuing truth as an absolute end *within* a discipline with having no ulterior motive in practising the discipline. In his later essays, however, this demand for purity of heart in worthwhile activities is explicitly relinquished, and with it the last trace of the earlier view that the development of a love of theoretical enquiry entirely for the sake of discovering theoretical truth, without reference to practice, is an aim – even a minor aim – of education. The primacy of the practical in Peters's philosophy of education may seem surprising, but it is characteristically Stoic, and Heraclitean.

Heraclitus remarks that 'although the account (*locus*) is shared, most men live as though their thinking (*phronesis*) were a private possession.'[35] In an exegesis of this passage, Charles H. Kahn writes as follows:

> In sum, the *logos* is 'common' because it is (or expresses) a structure that characterizes all things, and is therefore a public possession in principle available to all men, since it is 'given' in the immanent structure of their shared experience. The *logos* is also shared as a principle of agreement between diverse powers of understanding between speaker and hearer, of public unity and joint action among the members of a political community. The *logos* is all these things because the term signifies not only meaningful speech, but the exercise of intelligence as such, the activity of *nous* or *phronesis.* The deepest thought of *xynos logos,* more fully expressed in [D.114], is that what unites men is their rationality, itself the reflection of the underlying unity of nature.[36]

Kahn concludes that in Heraclitus *logos* means not simply language but rationality as experienced in thought, speech and action. The importance Peters attaches to rationality is abundantly evident in his work, as for example in his advocacy of 'concern for truth' discussed above. By the time of the Swarthmore Lecture, however, he was operating

with an enriched concept of rationality, broader than Heraclitus', broader even than that of the Stoics, and containing a good deal that one might be inclined to attribute to faculties other than reason.

He does not conceive reason as merely an inferential faculty. Neither does he confine it to thought (cognition), but argues that it depends upon and is unthinkable without certain passions such as love of clarity and truth and hatred of confusion and error. On this ground he rejects the common antithesis between reason and passion, maintaining also that one of the functions of reason is to convert and control the emotions. The force of wayward emotions is confronted and defeated by the calm but strong rational passions; it is by virtue of our desire to see things as they really are and our hatred of self-delusion that we strive to prevent our vision from being confined within narrow egocentric limits. Thus Peters incorporates into reason what Plato calls 'spirit' (*thymos*).

He also attributes to reason certain creative functions. Chief among these is meaning-giving, whereby our merely natural life is raised to a more civilized level. Sex, eating and fighting, for example, have been transformed by being brought under standards, so that exercise of these activities has come to involve skill, taste and moral sensitivity. Such transformations serve to improve the quality of life, which Peters considers to be the fundamental concern of education.[37] There is an obvious analogy between transforming natural activities by incorporating standards into them, and the invention of language in general and the various differentiated forms of knowledge. According to Peters, these also were produced by introducing standards into primitive responses and behaviour, and he considers them, more than anything else, to be constitutive of civilization.

He makes the analogy explicit in 'Subjectivity and Standards', and in doing so draws attention to the forms of knowledge as products of human creativity. This makes his account seem very like that given by Nietzsche in a piece which he wrote originally as an Introduction to the *Birth of Tragedy,* but which was published only posthumously in *The Will to Power.*[38] In it, Nietzsche classifies all the various 'forms of knowledge' as Art, and sees them as inventions by which man, cast into an otherwise desolate and meaningless existence, succeeds in making his life seem to him worthwhile.

Nietzsche represents the arts and sciences as being not forms of knowledge but forms of illusion, and ascribes value to them precisely on that account: 'We possess Art lest we perish of the truth.'[39] Peters goes so far as to describe the physical sciences as 'perhaps the finest product that yet exists of the sustained and controlled imagination of the human race',[40] thus paying a tribute to creativity, but he is far from regarding science, or any of the other disciplines, as less than forms of knowledge in the full traditional sense of the word. Unlike Nietzsche, he does not see overcoming nihilism as the supreme challenge to human creativity, because there is no trace in him of the kind of intense and radical scepticism one finds in Nietzsche. Instead, there is unclouded faith in the beneficial power of truth, and in the truth-bearing character of the traditional disciplines. It is impossible to imagine him knowingly glorifying illusion as a means of enhancing the quality of life. So, even here, where he is concerned with the creative power of reason,

and where his position seems so close to that of a great modern 'existentialist' philosopher, his true affinity is much more with a Stoic philosopher like Posidonius, concerning whom Ludwig Edelstein writes as follows:

> In the writings of the younger Stoics . . . a new tone becomes noticeable. The human arts are said to create a second nature, as it were. Posidonius traces in detail the triumph of the human mind that has led man from the most primitive life at the dawn of history to the height of civilization; and he glories in the achievement of man, who by his own efforts alone has overcome the hardships and shortcomings of the situation in which nature, his stepmother, has placed him. The god who speaks through reason has achieved the miracle against all obstacles that nature put in his way.[41]

Another creative function Peters attributes to reason, and considers as a means of improving the quality of life, is that of enhancing the individual's conception of activities in which he is engaged. He points out that in Spinoza's opinion, 'the important thing for a man is to grasp the patterns and relationships which structure his life'. This is part of what Spinoza meant when he said that it is the hallmark of reason to view things 'under a certain aspect of eternity or necessity'.[42] In his own treatment of this capacity for broadening one's view, Peters construes it as a more general capacity, rather than as a contemplative power specifically relating to eternity and necessity. He says that human activities are largely constituted by the conception men have of them:

> . . . a person committed to reason will tend to transform many mundane activities by conceptualization, and by linking them up with other things in life, which will make them much more absorbing and interesting.[43]

In this way, also, as well as by introducing standards into them, we determine what activities like sex and smoking are to be for us.

This transforming of activities by connecting them up with other things is Peters's version of what earlier liberal educationists like Arnold and Newman called 'expansion of the intellect'. The difference is that in the earlier thinkers broadening of outlook was associated with the idea of cross-cultural comparisons acting as incentives to critical reflection. In Peters, the expansion envisaged is entirely constructive, a matter of loading activities with significances, and so with values, and at the same time contributing towards the individual's gathering his life into a synthetic unity. It is one of the ways in which the individual 'makes sense of his life', and, indeed, makes a whole life of it. The notion of the individual as the artist of his own life was a commonplace among the Stoics, and can be found also in Aristotle.[44]

Finally, for Heraclitus, 'what is shared', the *logos,* is understood not just as language,

truth and reason, but also as the unifying formative aspect of Being, of the universe and the psyche alike.[45] The *logos* is also this same principle *qua* object of reflective thought – 'existing in the understanding', so to speak. Peters does not have so determinate a metaphysic as Heraclitus – for whom 'this universe is an ever-living fire, with measures of it kindling and measures going out'[46] – but there is a more general similarity between them. Peters's appreciation of the importance for 'world-making' of shared concepts leaves his sense of the reality of independent Being undiminished. He stresses that the variability of concepts does not make Nature conducive to our present wishes and purposes. We cannot, simply by changing our concepts, make flesh impenetrable by steel, or even change the consistency of putty.[47] The shared world in which we live is one into which Being everywhere obtrudes. It discloses itself constantly as that which has to be reckoned with, and cannot be got round or fixed up – in death, for example, but also, as we have seen, in every kind of physical necessity, in our having to experience the world as it appears to our senses, for example, without being able to determine what impressions we experience merely by willing them to be such and such. Peters refers to all this as 'contingency' or 'givenness'. Though contingency is met with everywhere in ordinary life, reflection can make us aware of the contingency of the universe as a whole. Peters describes this awareness in Kantian terms, as the recognition that no explanation of the existence of the universe is available, or even possible for us.[48] He goes on to assert the givenness not only of the universe but of certain powers of the subject, including shared senses and other responses such as assimilation and accommodation (the natural basis of our shared concept of causality).[49] Language and the world come into being simultaneously through the coming together of the being of the subject and the being to which the subject is intentionally related, in a context of being with others – the 'social dimension', which Peters rightly stresses. Hence the world is constituted not by entirely separate individuals, or even by 'consciousness', but by a *collective* subject; and because of the historicity of language and other 'traditions', by a *historical* subject – in other words, by what the Marxists call 'species man'.

Peters does not make this last aspect of the ontological basis of his position explicit, however; nor is he interested in any further analysis and development of his metaphysical views. His most fundamental response to Being is not speculative, but religious:

> Religion, as I understand it, is grounded on experiences of awe, an emotion to which human beings are subject when they are confronted with events, objects or people which are of overwhelming significance to them but which seem, in some important respect or other, inexplicable and shot through with contingency.[50]

He goes on to say that the appropriate response to a situation in which one feels awe is worship, and that worship is the attempt to express the sense of the impressiveness and significance of the object of awe. Thus one may use the word 'God', as Whitehead

does, to express the awe one feels when appreciating the ultimate contingency of the world. Peters thinks that it is unnecessary, however, to express this awe by creating a picture of a 'friend behind the scenes': 'What extra work does the postulation of a spirit behind the phenomena do?'[51]

The feeling of awe is most keenly aroused in Peters when he contemplates 'the predicament of any man trying to make something of his life.'[52] It dawns upon us, gradually, he says, that 'we have to make something of the brief span of years that is our lot', and the pathos of the human situation increases when we take into account the pointlessness of human life.[53] By calling life 'pointless' he means that man has no teleological 'function', natural or metaphysical, which determines how he ought to live.

Nowadays there are very many people who share this view, and Peters may be thought to have expressed it too dramatically by using the word 'pointless', which creates a suggestion of despair. I do not think either that he was being over-dramatic, or that the contemplation of the human situation induced in him any deep and lasting sense of despair. It is not just the fact that man's being-in-the-world is inexplicable, with no personal God or impersonal Destiny to give it meaning, that Peters finds overwhelmingly significant, but that man has to 'make sense' of the world and of his life in it. What Peters feels is awe, not despair, and the feeling of awe is accompanied by what seems like the immediate acceptance of a responsibility to discern and create significance within life.

Unlike Sartre, Peters does not even consider the possibility that the universe might be thought and felt to be redundant, and the invitation to find value in it refused. Unlike Nietzsche, he does not deliberately affirm life for the sake of its joy, which is worth more than all its pain. It does not occur to him to ask whether making sense of life is worth what life will cost in suffering, either for the individual or for mankind. He neither chooses to give meaning to life, nor 'plumps' for it, because the possibility of an alternative never presents itself to him. His response to Being-in-totality and to human being-in-the-world, or the contemplation of them, is one of piety. It happens to be inconsistent with his declared opinion that significance, including value, can only be discovered or created *within* life, for he attaches what is, according to his own account, a religious significance to that which gives and discovers meaning and that which receives and discloses it. These are not life, as Peters uses the expression, but the grounds and conditions of it.

Nevertheless, it is difficult not to believe that what makes the thought of the genesis of meaning overwhelmingly significant for Peters are the meanings already created and discovered in the public traditions. It is in the light of what has already been accomplished and handed on that he responds to the thought of Being with a feeling of piety. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that he believes that the public traditions are themselves proper objects of humility and reverence.[54] In terms of his own account, it would not have been inappropriate if, using religious language in a manner characteristic of the later Stoics, he had said that God was incarnate in them.

There is a certain blandness and complacency about Peters's thought which is

distasteful to those who identify with the excessively critical and resentful tendencies of the present time. Reverence is hardly fashionable now, and destruction and reconstruction of intellectual traditions seems more attractive than patient submission to them. These are only accidental temperamental differences between him and his younger contemporaries. But, irrespective of questions of temperament, we regard a refusal to go the limit in asking questions as a deficiency in a philosopher. Whether our attitude is justifiable in his particular case is problematical, however, for how many of us are any more capable than Peters is of answering, without preconception, the question of whether human life is worthwhile? If our answer is already given when the question is asked, what advantage do we have over him which justifies us in criticizing him? We could perhaps say that at least we acknowledge the existence of the question, and so admit that there is a worm at the heart of the rose. But a person of Stoical disposition, as Peters is, cannot be expected to attach any importance to making an acknowledgment which would be emotionally disturbing and yet lack point. What work would it do? Though his writings are not addressed to the individual, it is the individual whom Peters has always in mind, and the life he has to lead. From the standpoint of his benevolent practical concern, he cannot blamelessly allow himself to be distracted by idle speculations. Whether it is to our taste or not, we need to recognize that he is a philosopher in an older style, and the style is Stoical, as he himself acknowledges.

Peters's enrichment of the concept of reason gives rise to ambiguity and creates the possibility of tensions within it. There is a possibility of conflict between the dispositions which make up 'concern for truth'. Hatred of error, for example, may incline us towards vagueness and obscurity, over-riding our love of precision and clarity. According to Peters, love of order and consistency are central to reason, but they are not sufficient for truth, and have often been preferred to it. A mode of life in which values internal to concern for truth are extensively preferred to truth itself is readily conceivable. This is one thing which makes it difficult to grasp exactly what Peters's 'reasonable level of life' would be like.

Another is the ambiguity in Peters's key word 'reasonable', when it is used in practical contexts. So far as his explicit theory goes, his conception of practical reasoning is of deliberation which seeks to discover what is to be done. It aims at truth and is dominated by concern for truth. It is not a separate and distinct form of knowledge but a combination of the moral and empirical forms. Since in concrete contexts moral reasoning is of this same mixed type, Peters tends in effect to identify the practical with the moral. Stoic philosophy had the same tendency, from which in some part its sublimity derives.

Practical reason serves different purposes in different situations, but when there are conflicts of interests it may enable disputants to settle their differences without recourse to violence, a function which Peters recognizes and values. But to decide what *shall* be done in situations when the primary aim is accommodation of interests it is not normally necessary to discover what *is to be* done (i.e. the truly just thing to do). It is systematically

unclear whether Peters's concern is to raise the semi-barbarous majority to the ordinary civilized level at which interests are harmonized through discussion, or to raise the ordinary civilized standard closer to the moral ideal, which is approximation to moral truth. These two ends do not form a continuum and are not always compatible. Peters give the impression that practical reasonableness is the quest for moral truth *whereby* differences are resolved by discussion. But a general increase in degree of concern for moral truth will not necessarily mean an increase in the democratic capacity for accommodating conflicting interests, especially if there are sharp differences about what the moral truth is. Moral progress is not *ipso facto* progress towards social harmony.

Starting from what is realistically accomplishable, and attributing that kind of accomplishment to 'reason', Peters goes on to envisage a more ideal state of affairs, as if that is accomplishable by more of the same 'reason', without closely considering what in fact the nature of the intervening stages would have to be. The strain of idealistic puritanism so evident in his work is as basic in him as it is in Milton, and, as suggested above, has similarly strong classical, as well as Christian, antecedents.

Peters makes considerable use of a notion of 'demands of reason'. This notion is unproblematical so long as we understand by it such logical principles as the laws of non-contradiction and excluded middle. But he conceives reason also as demanding that questions be asked and answered for the sake of ascertaining truth. Originally, he construed these demands in an extreme manner, and on this basis provided a somewhat intimidatory 'justification' of education. In his later work he seems to have replaced this justification with a gentler and more credible version, and to have modified his notion of the demands of reason correspondingly. The new justification is, however, associated with a further and more serious problem, which calls into question Peters's hitherto confident orientation of education towards objectivity and away from the subjective– relative.

In *Ethics and Education* he argues that seriously to ask 'Why do this rather than that?' means that the questioner, having willed knowledge as an end, is already committed 'embryonically' to the means to its attainment, and the question is such that some degree of mastery of all the various 'forms of knowledge' is necessary for answering it.[55] Hence a need for, and a justification of, education as initiation into the public traditions. The impression Peters gives is that reason not only has jurisdiction over the individual soul, directing it to ends as well as regulating means, but also exercises a continuous psychological constraint upon it to engage in enquiry of ever-wider scope and greater depth. But the notion of embryonic commitment is ambiguous. Peters might have meant *prima facie* commitment, revocable when the full extent of what was involved in answering the question became clear or on some other ground. In fact, he seems to have meant *unlimited* commitment, the infinitude of which the serious individual discovers only gradually as reason makes further and further demands upon him – a Faustian kind of commitment, to be sure. Escape from this state of bondage can be gained only at the cost of not seriously asking this or any other practical question. So the choice, for every individual, is between being

either more reflective than Hamlet or less reflective than Laertes.

Fortunately, the predicament supposedly created by reason and its demands is illusory, because the seriousness that would have to be abandoned is that of the scientist or philosopher or other person who has made a profession of enquiry, not that of the ordinary person. How far the ordinary person should pursue his enquiry does not depend simply on whether further relevant questions can intelligibly be asked, but on what best serves his interest, and prudence is unlikely to counsel him to spend too long a time on theoretical enquiry.

It looks as if, in his later work, Peters abandoned the view that reason makes unlimited demands universally. In these later papers he develops his notion of the human predicament, and considers its consequences for education. In 'Education and Justification: a Reply' he mentions a region of concern – most commonly known, perhaps, as 'the human condition' – which, he says, is 'the region in which the demands of reason should operate', and 'whose boundaries should determine the extent to which questioning should be pressed'.[56] In 'Ambiguities in Liberal Education' he writes of 'questions arising from the general conditions of human life', answers to which 'provide a general framework of beliefs and attitudes through which particular ends are sought and particular puzzles arise'.[57] He provides examples of the kind of question he has in mind:

> What is he [the educand] to make of objects in the natural world and of phenomena such as the dark, thunder, the tides, time and the changes of the seasons? What is he to make of other people and of their reactions to him and to each other? What is he to think about himself and about questions of ownership? What attitude is he to take towards the cycle of birth, marriage and death? In what way is he to react to authority and violence?[58]

Peters thinks of these questions concerning the human condition as relevant to everyone, including those who are not at present interested in reflecting on them. To answer them, the employment of all the 'forms of knowledge' would be required. This constitutes a new justification of education as initiation into public traditions, and it is one which does not need to presuppose that the individual is subject to limitless rational demands. Thus a way of retreat from the earlier, untenable, position is opened up.

It seems that Peters came to adopt the view that reason does not demand that questions concerning the human condition should be raised, but that if they are, then 'the demands of reason should operate'. He might be taken as meaning that if learners do raise such questions, reason demands that they pursue them without limit. If so, then they are little better off than they were under his earlier dispensation. I think, however, that all he means is that enquiry within the various disciplines into general questions concerning aspects of the human condition should proceed in the manner which is normal

for those disciplines. Specialists in them will engage in the pursuit of truth with that passion for enquiry which we presume to be their dominant disposition. Non-specialist learners, however, are no longer thought of as conscripted by reason into unlimited intellectual activity but, more realistically, as freely engaging in their interdisciplinary studies with whatever degree of seriousness they naturally have, or their teachers can induce in them. Peters says that a major contemporary educational problem is that of finding a way of presenting to non-specialist learners knowledge which has been developed in the disciplines, which is highly relevant to the human condition, and which is likely to influence their beliefs concerning it.[59] This is consistent with what I take to be his later view. I think, therefore, that although he did not enquire into the matter specifically, he nevertheless modified his beliefs concerning the demands of reason. At least, he reached a point from which it would have been very easy for him to have done so.

Peters elucidates what it is to 'make sense' of life partly in terms of the creative, connective activity of reasons discussed above, and partly in terms of asking and answering questions about the human condition. In both cases there is ambiguity or tension between the individual and the universal. Is it the individual who conceptually connects his activities, or the public culture which connects these kinds of activities? Are the questions about the human condition answerable within the public traditions or only by private decision? This tension constitutes a threat to the very close connection Peters made in his earlier work between education and objectivity.

In 'Ambiguities in Liberal Education' Peters writes of the need to develop beliefs and attitudes which will help a person 'to make sense of and take up some stance towards the various situations and predicaments that he will inevitably encounter as a human being'.[60] In 'Education and Justification: a Reply' he says of the human condition, as an area of significance and concern, that it 'will combine areas of concern common to any human being with individual emphases and idiosyncrasies'.[61] In these remarks there is a suggestion that an aim, or hope, of the educator is that, on the basis of what he learns in the disciplines, each learner should begin to form a coherent personal world-view and life-philosophy. Strength is lent to this suggestion by Peters's claim, in the Swarthmore Lecture, that various attitudes to religion, including both faith and the rejection of religion altogether, are open to a rational man, and by the fact that his own attitude is different from both of these. Thus Peters seems to have acknowledged the incapacity of the disciplines, including morals, philosophy and religion, to determine adequately what ought to be believed about matters of the highest importance, and what attitudes ought to be adopted towards these things. He seems to have envisaged the creation of incompatible and even mutually antagonistic personal interpretations by individuals of their being-in-the-world, of which his own Stoic view of life is one. This lends his philosophical endeavour a somewhat tragic aspect: 'The world of the waking is one and shared, but the sleeping turn aside each into his private world.'[62]

Love of truth demands of Peters that he recognize that the only justifiable attitudes to many of the questions which arise out of reflection on the human situation and condition

are agnostic ones. It cannot acquiesce in the construction of non-objective personal world-views and views of life, and there is no form of knowledge recognized by Peters and Hirst in which these constructions could be made. In the Swarthmore Lecture, however, prominence is given to the creative functions of reason, and by the criteria which are relevant to *these* functions, even the personal decisions by which the individual *Weltanschauung* is formed would count as rational choices. They would be choices of the sort artists make, however. Thus the passionate concern for truth is subordinated to the values involved in 'making sense' of things and giving order and unity to one's life.

I doubt whether Peters has fully grasped the magnitude of the departure from his earlier position which is involved in his later tendency to emphasize the educational importance of reflection on the human condition. What is clear is that in his later work he is anxious that individual learners should construct their world-views out of materials which have satisfied the discipline's criteria of truth or probability, or of having some warrant, or at least of not being demonstrably false or invalid or incorrect. (Alternative materials might be derived from myths, *pseudo*-sciences, wishes, and prejudices of various kinds.)

But if the truth, etc. of these materials is of the first importance, it is imperative that the disciplines themselves be free, so far as is humanly possible, from hindrance and distortions which would reduce their capacity for the establishment of truth. Peters and Hirst's failure to elaborate their account of forms of knowledge beyond the very primitive sketch they supply in *The Logic of Education* is one of the most serious weaknesses in their educational philosophy. They emphasize, however, that the forms are historical institutions, which have undergone a long period of evolution. Peters praises Hegel and Marx for their vivid awareness of the 'social dimension of mind', specifically mentioning Hegel's notion of objective mind, articulated in institutions.[63] It is surprising that, having so stressed the social and historical character of the forms of knowledge, he should provide such an *a priori* account of their character in 'Subjectivity and Standards', where besides arguing that truth is what gives them all point, he argues that the standards of each are formed by the generalization of particular responses. But the aims and procedures of historical institutions, especially if these have the character of languages, will tend to be extremely complex, and to be discoverable only by resolute and sensitive empirical enquiry. An educational theory which does not even try to look and see what they are, but takes an idealized conception of science as the measure against which the other disciplines appear, in their various degrees, to fall short, is likely to have unfortunate educational consequences, not least in the aesthetic domain. For it will underwrite and advocate standards and procedures which are inappropriate to disciplines whose ends it has misconceived.

One would have expected a philosopher who proclaims the social and historical character of the forms of knowledge to have been sensitive to the work of sociologists of knowledge, such as Schutz, for example, to philosophers like Husserl and Scheler who have produced important work in this area, and to some of the able contemporary

sociologists of knowledge working in the analytical and phenomenological traditions. Among these thinkers some are deeply concerned with the relations of the special disciplines to their sources in ordinary language and the 'natural attitude'. Many are keenly aware of the complexity of the procedures and motivations of the disciplines, and of the discrepancies which frequently exist between the aims actually being pursued and those which the practitioners believe their discipline to be pursuing. Peters shows very little interest in the sociology of knowledge, however, and what interest he does show is unsympathetic.[64] He does not anywhere acknowledge that the disciplines stand in need of thoroughgoing interdisciplinary investigation and critique. His attitude seems to be that they are self-correcting and should be trusted absolutely.

This may be because he tends to think of the forms as objective mind, teleologically directed towards the faithful and adequate reflection of a reality which is itself orderly and developing, in accordance with its own principle, towards the fullest possible articulation and internal differentiation. This Hegelian picture is imaginatively attractive, but not really conducive to the health of the disciplines. Peters may also have been influenced by the thought of the circularity involved in the idea of reason criticizing itself. The specialized disciplines are not identical with reason itself, however, and are demonstrably capable of being illuminated by historical, sociological and philosophical enquiry.

Peters shows excessive reverence for standards generally, not only in the disciplines, but also in connexion with improvement of the quality of life. He does not ask, in some cases, whether the introduction of standards into 'natural' activities may not be worth the price it exacts. The standards introduced into sexual relations in the Middle Ages, for example, by the Arab poets of Andalusia and the troubadours, and the connexions they made between sex, love, honour and religion, may have given rise to a sweet new style in behaviour as well as in poetry, but they were also responsible for a great deal of guilt, anguish and despair. Standards cannot be relied upon to make life worthwhile, any more than they can be relied on for the establishment of truth and the proper ends of the disciplines generally. Continuous critical reflection upon them is required if the quality of life and the health of the discipline is to be preserved and improved.

Reverence for standards prevents Peters from appreciating the strength of the progressive educationalists' case. He refutes the extreme view that no standards whatever should be applied to children's work, and that they should be allowed simply to express themselves and 'do their own thing'. Less extreme progressivists do not reject standards altogether, however, but object to the use of too rigorous standards, by which they mean standards whose enforcement tends to stifle creativeness and destroy enthusiasm for the subject being studied. Many teachers of English, for example, have believed that insistence on high rhetorical standards tends to be detrimental to individual self-expression and the child's enjoyment of writing. Even in undergraduate study of philosophy such high critical standards may be set that students become afraid to say anything in the least adventurous. In such circumstances, studying the subject can become a miserable

affair, even for persons with good aptitude for it, and lead to stultification rather than development. What is needed, pedagogically, is a sort of dialectic of freedom and constraint, and, at least in so far as that is what they are insisting upon, the progressivists' case is a good one.

In the preceding pages I have tried to provide a sketch of Peters's philosophy of education, in so far as it is a philosophy of 'the older style', and to indicate what I take to be certain inadequacies in it. These seem to spring, for the most part, from his keen interest in construction, which hardly allows him to submit his own ideas, enthusiastically conceived, to remorseless critical scrutiny of the kind practised by, say, Plato in his later dialogues. These presumed inadequacies notwithstanding, Peters's work is exceptional for its time, and needed by it.

Those parts of Peters's work which deal with 'relatively concrete issues' fit into the framework of his world-view and philosophy of life, and make a large contribution to the substance and general impressiveness of the whole. I shall not comment on the value they have entirely in their own right, but continue to consider Peters's work in so far as it is a philosophy in 'the older style'. From this perspective it appears as having qualities which lift it above ordinary professional philosophizing and give it an aspect of greatness. First, it is 'authentic' in the sense that the philosopher reveals himself in it, an essential feature in a philosophy of life if it is to warrant serious attention. Secondly, it instantiates and gives a fresh and powerful expression to the Stoic cast of mind, which perennially compels respect. Finally, it is not a latter-day imitation of a once-admired mode, but a new creation in the grand style. This is partly because Peters was to some extent unaware of himself as creating a philosophy of this kind, but thought himself to be doing something different; and partly because in addressing lay audiences he allowed himself to follow his bent. Whatever the causes and conditions, he succeeded in producing something like a 'system', expressive of him in the kind of way that the great traditional philosophies of education are expressive of their authors.

What his work teaches us, in particular, is that philosophy of education cannot properly confine itself to 'relatively concrete issues', and that to understand education we need to 'place' it in the total context of human being. In effect Peters recognizes that he was mistaken in his earlier belief that philosophy of education exists primarily, if not entirely, for the sake of helping the teacher in the classroom. Philosophy did not free itself from domestic service to theology in order to become, in the sphere of education, little better than the odd-job man of pedagogy.

In his later work, Peters not only advocates but exemplifies what he came to regard as the final end of education – not 'the educated man' with his 'O' and 'A' levels and his BA or BSc, worthy though he is, but the person who is a philosopher of a kind everyone can be, and which very many people have at least some interest in being. Furthermore, Peters shows in his own work that this end is not quickly and easily attained, but occupies a lifetime, not as a continuous process of enquiry, however, but as a broadening and

deepening of reflection in the light of personal experience, and in receipt of further relevant information and fresh stimulation from the public culture.

Peters reaffirms the educational importance of the personal view of life, and therefore the need for a variety of emphases in philosophy of education. His Stoic perspective is a noble one, but other admirable perspectives are possible – the Christian perspective of Simone Weil, for example, or the Marxist perspective of Antonio Gramsci.

The understanding of education will remain incomplete if it is not related to the intellectuals, with respect to both the producing of them, and the influence they have upon education itself. Peters compares unfavourably with Gramsci in this respect; although he explains what education is, he fails to account for himself, the educator of the educationalists. But he and Gramsci and Simone Weil all agree in the belief that a principal part of the schooling of the young should be their introduction to the humanities and the sciences. Peters's best service to education – as distinct from his service to philosophy of education – has been his powerful affirmation, and repeated reaffirmation, of his secure faith in the formal intellectual tradition.

Notes

1. R.S. *Peters, Education in Initiation: an inaugural lecture delivered at the University of London Institute of Education, 9 December 1963* London, Harrap, for University of London Institute of Education, 1967, p. 7.

2. *Ibid.,* p. 8.

3. R.S. Peters, *Ethics and Education,* Allen & Unwin, 1966, p. 15.

4. Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958.

5. Allen & Unwin, 1974.

6. *Ibid.,* p. 19.

7. Friends Home Service Committee, 1972.

8. W.R. Niblett (ed.), *Science, the Humanities and the Technological Threat,* University of London Press, 1974.

9. *Psychology and Ethical Development,* p. 19.

10. R.S. Peters, J. Woods and W.H. Dray, 'Aims of Education – a Conceptual Enquiry', in R.S. Peters (ed.), *The Philosophy of Education,* Oxford University Press, 1973.

11. *Proceedings of the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain,* Jan. 1970.

12. *Ibid.,* p. 11.

13. *Education as Initiation,* pp. 34–5.

14. P.H. Hirst and R.S. Peters, *The Logic of Education,* Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970, p. 62.

15. *Psychology and Ethical Development,* p. 426.

16. *Reason, Morality and Relegion,* p. 88.

17. *Ibid.,* pp. 64–5.

18. Peters has a further argument, viz. that the Marxists will have nothing (worthwhile) to do when the Marxist end has been attained. See, e.g., *Psychology and Ethical Development,*

p. 416.

19. *Ethics and Education,* p. 53.

20. *Education as Initiation,* p. 43.

21. *Ethics and Education,* p. 54. See also *Education as Initiation,* p. 40.

22. Charles H. Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus,* Cambridge University Press, 1979, p. 106. The fragment (D.107) translated by Kahn is: ?a??? μa?t??e? a????p????? s?a?μ?? ?a? ?ta ßa?ßa???? ???a? e?s?t??

23. *Proceedings of the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain,* Vol. II, July 1977, pp. 28–38.

24. *Reason, Morality and Religion,* p. 87.

25. D.43: 'One must quench violence quicker than a blazing fire' (trans. Kahn).

26. See Charles H. Kahn, *op. cit.,* p. 241.

27. D.85: 'It is hard to fight against passion; for whatever it wants it buys at the expense of soul' (trans. Kahn). Kahn argues that *thymos* is to be understood as 'anger' in this fragment. *Op. cit.,* p. 242.

28. See: Charles H. Kahn, *op. cit.,* p. 243.

29. *Reason, Morality and Religion,* p. 38.

30. *Psychology and Ethical Development,* p. 21.

31. *Ethics and Education,* p. 165.

32. *Reason, Morality and Religion,* p. 70.

33. *Ibid.,* p. 48.

34. *The Philosophy of Education,* p. 18.

35. D.2, trans. Kahn.

36. Charles H. Kahn, *op. cit.,* pp. 101–2.

37. *Psychology and Ethical Development,* p. 416.

38. F. Nietzsche, *The Will to Power,* ed. W. Kaufmann, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1968, sect. 853, pp. 451–3.

39. *Ibid.,* sect. 822, p. 435.

40. *Psychology and Ethical Development,* p. 421.

41. Ludwig Edelstein, *The Meaning of Stoicism,* Harvard University Press, for Oberlin College, 1966, p. 68.

42. *Reason, Morality and Religion,* p. 68.

43. *Ibid.*

44. Peters cites Aristotle in this regard. See: *Ethics and Education,* p. 155.

45. See Kahn, *op. cit.,* pp. 21–2.

46. D.30.

47. *Psychology and Ethical Development,* p. 415.

48. *Reason, Morality and Religion,* p. 82.

49. *Psychology and Ethical Development,* p. 417.

50. *Reason, Morality and Religion,* pp. 80–1.

51. *Ibid.,* p. 83.

52. *Ibid.,* p. 84.

53. *Ibid.,* p. 99.

54. *Psychology and Ethical Development,* p. 424; *Reason, Morality and Religion,* p. 67.

55. *Ethics and Education,* p. 164.

56. 'Education and Justification: a Reply', pp. 35–6.

57. 'Ambiguities in Liberal Education and the Problem of its Content', in R.S. Peters, *Education and the Education of Teachers,* Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977, p. 54.

58. *Ibid.*

59. *Ibid.,* p. 55.

60. *Ibid.,* pp. 55–6.

61. 'Education and Justification: a Reply', p. 35.

62. D.89, trans. Kahn.

63. *Ethics and Education,* p. 49.

64. E.g., *Psychology and Ethical Development,* p. 415.

METAPHYSICS IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

John Haldane

I

Contemporary philosophers of education, at any rate in the English-speaking world, are now much concerned with questions about the very nature of their subject, about its relation to other subjects and to other branches of philosophy and about its future. Indeed, in recent years a number of well-known authors have surveyed the current state of the subject, raised doubts about its condition and proceeded to pose the question: 'whither philosophy of education?'[2]

Such reflective questions are always worth asking, but they are not always worth dwelling extensively upon. In academic pursuits, as in personal life, self-reflection can be a necessary distraction, an absorbing diversion, but, at the limit, an entirely incapacitating preoccupation. We tend, in general, to exaggerate the features of our own circumstances and to underestimate those of other situations and periods. Sometimes this tendency issues in intellectual triumphalism, as witness to which consider the 'now we're getting somewhere' attitude of current cognitive psychology. At other times, however, this form of egocentrism expresses itself in sustained pessimism about contemporary thinking; hence the 'now we're in the doldrums' way of thinking.

Having acknowledged these exaggerative tendencies it would be as well to correct them and to set aside self-examination for attention to the problems that remain to be treated.[3] To this advice, however, someone might well reply that the introspective turn occurs, here as elsewhere, precisely when it seems that the old problems have disappeared or lost their interest. Hence, in these circumstances, there is nothing to which one might return. Accordingly, the subject has a future only if there can be a discovery of new problems or of new methods of enquiry. This conditional proposition can, of course, be run through from two directions, and it would be an interesting, though essentially trivial, task to divide current commentators on the state of the subject into *optimists* and *pessimists* according as to whether they affirm the antecedent and

detach the consequent, or contrapose to conclude that philosophy of education is moribund.

However, my interest is in an assumption of the reply from which the conditional was derived. It is no doubt true, I think, that when an intellectual enquiry goes stale what is sometimes needed is for a new voice to speak out – not to propound new solutions to old difficulties but to set novel problems. This, though, requires genius of a sort which occurs less often than do the periodic feelings of staleness or loss of confidence. Another and more realistic prospect is that one might try to revitalise oneself by looking again at the old problems and reconsidering old solutions to them which have previously come to be forgotten, or to be rejected as incoherent or as resting on unacceptable assumptions.

Most of the questions with which recent philosophers of education have been concerned only arise in certain sorts of social context, most especially ones in which there are organised schools. Thus, questions about neutrality, equality of access and provision, curriculum design, assessment, competition, discipline, pupils' rights, etc. are largely confined to what might be termed the philosophy of schooling. But there are also important questions, the terms of which find application wherever there are social groups however small or simple in organisation. One of these is the epistemological question: 'how is teaching possible?' Another is the teleological one: 'what is education for?' Both questions were taken very seriously by Plato and Aristotle and again by the philosophers of the Middle Ages who followed in their footsteps. In the modern period, however, most philosophical issues were subordinated to epistemology and most epistemological issues were referred to the general enquiry into the origins of understanding, conceived of largely as an investigation into the nature and source of our concepts. That task continues now, often under the title *cognitive psychology*. But while I find it interesting and important, I do not believe that, as things stand, there is any reason to think that philosophers of education are likely to make useful progress in it. More promising from this point of view is the other question: 'what is education for?'

In keeping with the philosophical character of our interests any adequate answer will have to be fully general. But in saying this I have already made contact with an important philosophical issue. For why should an account of the purposes of education be general? and how general should it be? As regards the former of these questions, two points are relevant. First, in asking what education is for, we are seeking an answer that is at one and the same time descriptive and normative, explanatory and justificatory. We want to know what its point is and how achieving that result is a 'pointful' goal of activity, i.e. something worth doing. Hence sociological reports on the educational practices of particular communities can have only limited value. I am not assuming that pure conceptual analysis is the proper way of answering the question. Indeed, I shall be emphasising the philosophical importance of the empirical constitution of those involved in education. All the same, we need to ascend from the level of particular practices in identified populations to

a general account of the aim of education as such. The second relevant point is that made by Aristotle in connection with all theoretical enquiries, namely that particulars are only intelligible as instances of general natures,[4] which is to say that in looking at any given case of education the appropriate question is: 'why is this a case of *education*?'

Turning from the argument for generality as such to the matter of its scope, I want now to bring in the empirical element mentioned a moment ago. Concentrating hard on the word 'education' is an unappealing and unproductive activity if one so sets the task that any reference to the nature of those undergoing education is excluded. There is an old methodological principle, owing to Aristotle but more extensively employed by his scholastic successors, which holds that natures are differentiated by their proper powers, powers are known by their acts and acts as specified by their objects.[5] This is a form of functionalism, the application of which in the present context suggests two important ideas. First, although education is logically prior to the achievement of its aims, one can only understand what education is by seeing what its characteristic objects are. So in the order of enquiry (*ordo inveniendi*) the investigation of aims precedes any final account of the nature of education. Secondly, in characterising its purposes one needs to look at the products of this process, that is to say at the educated, and to see what their present state is and how it differs from earlier states.

Here, then, some restriction on the scope of any enquiry into the proper aims of education presents itself. If you want to know what education is for, then you had better have an understanding of the nature of those involved. These various considerations amount to a case for generalising the scope of enquiry up to but not beyond the level of the human as such. Clearly, education involves the cultivation of intellectual powers through rational processes, but this should not encourage anyone to think that an account of human education in these respects will just be an application of a general theory of rational education equally applicable to Jupiterians and Angels. Intellectual powers and rational processes as we know them are incarnate in complex social animals – *ourselves* – and nothing, or precious little, may follow from descriptions of human rationality about the forms of mindedness that may yet be found in other beings.

In the following pages I shall not be concerned to argue in detail for a particular account of the nature and purpose of education but rather to defend one ancient way of determining the content of such an account against a range of modern objections to it. The view I favour, and wish to defend, is an implication of a more general philosophical position which is a form of Naturalism, combining a realist epistemology and metaphysics and an objectivist theory of value. Before outlining the view, however, let me say something about how approaching educational issues in this way both resembles and differs from another more recent approach which also goes under the title of Philosophical Naturalism.

II

Several writers have begun to use the phrase 'Post Analytic Philosophy of Education' to characterise recent work produced by philosophers in Britain, the United States and Australasia. Like the expression 'Post Modernism' this phrase is sometimes employed to denote particular ideas (though not always the same ones), but more often it serves simply to indicate a range of work united principally by its contemporaneity and by its rejection of the methods and preoccupations of post-war conceptual analysts. One familiar element in this recent movement away from metatheoretical enquiry is normative or first-order ethics. Another distinctive component, which I believe will become more prominent, is the trend towards the development of philosophies of education derived from general metaphysical theories.

This is, of course, a return to an older tradition. But the main form of recent development is very different to the familiar philosophies inasmuch as it aims to give a theory of education (often with accompanying prescriptions for practice) derived from a reductive physicalist ontology. Two writers active in this area, J.C. Walker and C.W. Evers, describe their approach as 'Materialist Pragmatism'.[6] However, since they and most of the other physicalist philosophers of education work in Australia and emphasise their ambition to accommodate educational theory within an all-embracing 'naturalistic' world-view, I shall refer to this general materialist approach as '*Australian Naturalism*'.[7]

In one respect I have considerable sympathy with this development. In an introduction to their materialist educational philosophy Walker and Evers write as follows:

> Without doubt one of the most serious gaps in analytical philosophy of education has been its failure even to acknowledge major developments in philosophical logic, epistemology, ontology and philosophy of language stemming from the work of such philosophers as Davidson, Donellan, Putnam, Rorty, Sellars and, most importantly, Quine . . . . We hope that the way might now be clearer for an explicit, tough-minded yet open-minded resumption of theory-competition in philosophy of education, and that this will serve to enhance the development of educational theory and practice.[8]

Certainly, philosophy of education has been conducted largely in isolation from the main body of the subject. Likewise, the aspiration to return to substantial theorising about education merits endorsement. Where I part company with the Australian Naturalists is over the issue of what general metaphysical and related views commend themselves. For while I also am drawn to a version of philosophical naturalism, the

two underlying conceptions of *nature* are mutually repellent.

Earlier, I argued that in considering the purposes of education one must focus attention on the character of its products. Education is a process of formation involving the realisation of certain potentialities. Whatever the particularities of the case, education is part of a general movement towards the full actualisation of the subject's nature. To formulate the goals of human education, therefore, and to determine how best these might be achieved, one needs to have an account of the kind of thing a human being is. That is to say, one needs an organised set of descriptions of the various capacities characteristic of man, of the pattern of their development and inter-relations and of the states and activities in which a developed human being most fully realises his or her nature. Such an organised body of knowledge answers to the interests of both *theoretical* and *practical* reason. It serves to answer questions both as to what is the case and as to what ought to be done – achieving the latter indirectly by determining what ought to be the case.

The position I wish to defend is thus a version of Aristotelian naturalism. Education is aimed at developing our essential nature by systematically cultivating various capacities in accordance with their inbuilt structure and teleology. On this account education may be both instrumentally and intrinsically valuable. As regards the first, it is of worth inasmuch as it satisfies a prerequisite of human flourishing. Education is needed because it is the means of developing those capacities (various practical and intellectual skills), the exercise of which is itself a precondition of achieving a good human life. And it is intrinsically valuable because some of the activities it involves are themselves realisations of capacities, the exercise of which is partly constitutive of human flourishing. Again various activities spring to mind, such as art-making, interpretative enquiries, sport and intellectual problem-solving.

The central philosophical concepts in a theory of education of this sort are those of a *Human Person* and of *Human Virtues.* The role of the former is obvious enough. A teleological theory requires an account of the agents involved. The role of the idea of appropriate virtues, meanwhile, is most easily grasped if one thinks of virtue not in a restrictedly moral sense but rather as an enduring excellence of character with respect to any given human activity. Historically, the best writer on the philosophy of virtue is Aquinas, who forges the connection between *human nature, teleology* and *virtue* in the first section of his 'Treatise on Habits'. He writes:

> . . . habit implies a disposition in relation to a thing's nature and to its operation or end, by reason of which disposition a thing is well or ill disposed thereto . . . . By the form the nature of a thing is perfected: yet the subject needs to be disposed in regard to the form by some disposition . . . . But if the form be such that it can operate in diverse ways [as is the case with man, who can choose how to act] it needs to be disposed to its operation by means of habits.[9]

and later he writes:

> Virtue denotes a certain perfection of a power. Now a thing's perfection is considered chiefly in regard to its end. But the end of power is act. Wherefore power is said to be perfect, according as it is determinate to its act . . . . But the rational powers, which are proper to man, are not determinate to one particular action, but are inclined indifferently to many: and they are determinate to acts by means of habits . . . . Therefore human virtues are habits.[10]

According to this view, then, the purpose of education is to promote good human lives by cultivating virtue. Remember that the terms *good* and *virtue* are not being used here in a narrowly moral sense. Indeed, their primary meanings are in fact non-moral ones. This form of Naturalism is reductive of moral concepts in the sense of giving an account of their proper application[11] in terms of the promotion and achievement of certain kinds of life, the description of which employs only non-moral value concepts appropriate to the various aspects of human nature. The notion of virtue is likewise to be explicated by reference to whatever capacities and dispositions are required as means to the achievement of a good life or are partly constitutive of it.

Writing some years ago in answer to the question 'Must an educator have an aim?' R.S. Peters observed that:

> Many in recent times have blamed philosophers for neglecting their traditional task in relation to education. For, in the old days, it is argued, philosophers explained what the good life and the good society were; and this provided aims for educationalists.[12]

In the following discussion, he elaborates the point that a feature of traditional philosophies of education is that they have implications for curriculum planning. For this is then regarded as a matter of determining particular methods for the achievement of the good kind of life. However, he claims that this model of how to proceed, as involving the adoption of means to premeditated ends, 'misleads us in the sphere of education'. Part of his reason for objecting to the model is precisely that it presupposes a view of education as having a generally accepted purpose and this is something which he, like many others, wishes to deny.

I shall consider two ways in which this objection might be understood and offer replies to them. But before moving on to the general task of defence, it will be as well to note that Peters is right in thinking that views which propose an aim of education may serve as sources for the derivation of curriculum policy. So far as concerns the virtue-centred teleological approach which I have advocated, this derivation may proceed in appropriately Aristotelian fashion by way of the construction of series of practical syllogisms leading from one or more characterisations of the desired end down divergent strings of prescriptions to actual policies.[13] With regard to the content of

these latter, perhaps it will be sufficient in the present circumstances if I say that the appropriate curriculum would be one structured around the task of enabling children to realise and to understand their nature as rational and social animals and to comprehend the structure of their environment as an object of theoretical knowledge, practical activity and aesthetic contemplation: a rather traditional blend of sciences, humanities and arts and one at odds with the socially contingent, utilitarian life-skills approach still favoured among many educationalists.

III

At this point let me turn from advocacy to defence; to the consideration of and response to three kinds of objection to the approach outlined above. These can be strung together in the following tripartite challenge. First, my view assumes an account of persons as bearers of folk-psychological attributes and this has been shown to be flawed and perhaps even incoherent. Secondly, even if human persons are as everyday psychology represents them as being, the attempt to derive normative conclusions from facts about human kind relies upon a long-discredited teleology and in any event commits the naturalistic fallacy. Thirdly, even if an appropriate view of persons and of the good life for them could be established, it would be illegitimate to invoke it in the context of determining educational policy, since the latter may not invoke substantial metaphysical and ethical outlooks.

As I noted earlier, the distinctive feature of Australian Naturalism is its presumption of an unqualified physicalist ontology. Something of the character of this is apparent in the following sample of quotations:

> If the cultivation of rationality is to be an important educational aim then some account of rationality needs to be given. Strong realism and strong physicalism imply that a plausible theory of rationality needs to take account of what thinkers are as physical systems . . . .

> Worries about the truth of folk platitudes can be allayed if we view commonsense thinking as a beginning of science and expect revision and refinement as science progresses. Central to [these] worries is the idea that psychological concepts and physical concepts cross-classify one another in such a way as to preclude the identification of properties across psycho-physical reduction.

> . . . I propose we can [overcome this problem] by making use of functionalist frameworks.[14]

Of course, not all explanation as yet admits of reduction to physics or elimination in favour of physical explanation, and many deny that the job can be done even in principle. For M[aterialist] P[ragmatism], however, the general direction is clear. The

tests for social and educational theory are whether it can be systematised in the required fashion and whether it is physicalist.[15]

> The strategy behind this demand for coherence with physical theory is not just the elimination of *substance* dualism . . . and attendant methodological bifurcations. Rather the aim is to press for the elimination of *property* dualism, either through the provision of type–type reductions for mental properties (contrary to much functionlist thinking) or the replacement, through elimination, of mental types by other non-equivalent types, drawn from the developing theoretical taxonomies of scientific theory. This approach might be regarded as a form of what Paul Churchland calls 'elminative materialism'.[16]

These various authors are drawing upon patterns of argument that originate in the writings of Quine and Sellars. For brevity I shall sketch an outline of the latter's ideas only. These are also of special interest inasmuch as they have again become influential through the evangelism of Sellars's talented former student, Paul Churchland.

Everyone agrees that we have an idea of ourselves and of others as centres of consciousness and agency. We explain our fellow human beings' behaviour by interpreting it as engaged in on the basis of certain beliefs and in pursuit of certain purposes. We regard beliefs as logically structured attitudes which, if all is in order, represent (among other things) objects and features of our common environment. We suppose that in discourse and through the manipulation of other media we are able to communicate with one another: conveying information, expressing feelings, inducing resposnes and so on. In brief, we have an idea of ourselves as bearers of psychological states and subjects of intentional activity.

The question arising in philosophy is: is this idea correct? Sellars invites us to consider how one might come by such a view.[17] Imagine a group of creatures apparently like ourselves who engage in various primitive forms of group behaviour. Suppose they develop some sign system which in due course acquires the complexity of language. They use this to co-ordinate their efforts and to assess its progress. Imagine now that they extend its application to characterise each other's verbal and non-verbal behaviour. One member of the group, say, announces that he wants to bring something about and so is going to proceed in a certain way. He then goes on to carry this out. Others might now comment: 'He said he wanted to do such and such and then he did it.' This might become a regular pattern – utterance followed by non-verbal performance followed by commentary. Suppose now, however, that at a later stage the same member embarks upon the task in the usual manner and circumstances but with the difference that in the period preceding his activity he is silent. His companions, wanting to explain his behaviour as due to prior conditions, might now say: 'He acted in the way he usually does consequent upon saying what he wants to achieve and how he is going to achieve it. So there must have been something unobservable happening which is like what occurs in the usual circumstance and produces the familiar behaviour.' That, in short, is an account of how

we might have constructed the concept of thought as *inner saying* which sometimes gives rise to overt bodily behaviour.

The central idea in this, and that which drives Churchland's eliminative aspirations, is that psychological concepts are theoretical notions introduced via hypotheses created to explain observable events and processes by positing internal (and unobserved) causes. More generally, the concept of *Persons,* as centres of consciousness and agency, is a large-scale theoretical contruct composed out of these various explanatory notions. But whereas the creatures in the myth, and ourselves until quite recently, could do little better by way of explanation than this, we are now in a position to delve deep into the internal causes of systematic bodily movement. And in doing so what we find are peripheral sense organs, afferent nerves, synaptic networks, efferent nerves, motor-organs and the such like. What we do not find, however, are beliefs, desires, intentions, motives and other instances of folk-psychological concepts. What we ought to do, therefore, if only as theorists, is to abandon what I shall call 'person psychology' in favour of a theoretically respectable physicalist alternative – that being cognitive science and/or neuroscience. At any rate we must reject any philosophical position which involves a concept of persons as thinking agents. And that, of course, puts paid to the account of education and its purposes proposed above.

Since I have discussed eliminative materialism in connection with Churchland's views on a recent occasion and at some length,[18] I shall not dwell on these issues here. Let me simply offer some observations by way of response to the general objection to personal psychology. First, then, I think one should be suspicious of the claim that concepts of thought and action are theoretical notions purporting to designate unobserved entities postulated in causal– explanatory laws. Against this, consider the possibility (faithful to the phenomenology of much psychological description) that many of these concepts are observational. We, quite literally, *see* human beings speak, laugh, cry, lose their nerve, fall into confusion, comprehend a point, provoke one another, offer comfort and so on. And since these are all person-involving features, in seeing them we see persons. Secondly, on the theoretical view the meaning of such concepts must be given by their roles in closed, universal generalisations which relate their instances as cause and effect. But there are no such psycho-behavioural causal laws.[19] Thirdly, the effort to eliminate psychological descriptions in favour of physicalist ones by identifying the relevant bodily events, otherwise characterised in the language of action, fails because the only coherent principles of identity and individuation are those provided by concepts of intentional behaviour.

This last point is best made by example. Suppose I want to check on the reference of an essay I have discussed. I reach over to a pile of papers on an adjacent desk. Consider various descriptions couched in the terms of folk psychology which might be given of this behaviour. I am producing an essay, checking a reference, finding a piece of paper, reaching across a space and so on. It is a familiar thought that no type–type identity theory is possible correlating actions and bodily movements. There are, for example, many ways of checking a reference and not all extensions of arms are reachings. What should be added, however, is that it is equally impossible to provide token–token

identities. That is to say, the claim that actions can be wholly accounted for within a physicalist ontology, as movements of quantities of matter, is false. The nature of the problem for physicalism emerges as soon as one asks what is the candidate (token) physical event with which my act of checking on the reference is to be identified? Presumably some bodily movement, but which? One might proceed to individuate one by specifying spatio-temporal boundaries – a movement within a certain space occurring during a given period of time. But think of all the movements involving my body that might have occurred in the relevant spatio-temporal location: heartbeats, blinks, limb-trembles, contractions of foot muscles and so on. Of course, some of these will have been parts of the action, but two points should be noted. First, there is no prospect of individuating relevant movements of matter save via some applicable action concept. Secondly, the relationship between the movements so individuated and the action itself is not one of identity but one of constitution. Actions are in this sense more than bodily movements and in the same sense and for the same reason – the involvement of psychological properties – persons are more than bodies. The prospect of physicalist reduction or elimination is thus illusory.

IV

The idea of human persons as rational agents is necessary but not sufficient for the virtue-centred, teleological account of the purpose of education which I am proposing. In addition, it must be assumed that there are certain patterns of proper development in human life leading to *eudaimonia,* or full flourishing. Earlier, I quoted Peters's objection to the idea that education has a generally accepted purpose. One way of reading that objection is as an implication of the rejection of objective teleologies. If there is nothing that human life is *for,* i.e. no condition of fulfilment towards which it is naturally inclined, then this puts an end to one kind of account of the aims of education, and perhaps even to the very idea of its having a proper purpose as opposed to whatever purposes people choose for it.

The Aristotelian view of the world as containing a fixed range of species each of which has a characteristic pattern of proper development is generally supposed to have been refuted by the new science of the Renaissance and the subsequent developments stemming from it. The old view, which was built around the two central concepts of *natural kinds* and *final causes,* was replaced by a modern science of nature in which the relevant indices of difference are mathematically representable *quantities,* and explanation of change is in terms of *efficient causation,* or, in later versions, *functional relationships.* The rejection of the Aristotelian scheme, as this had been developed by the schoolmen of the Middle Ages, was explicitly argued for by Descartes[20] and further insisted upon by Hume.

This history suggests a further respect in which we may regard Descartes as being the author of modern philosophy. Usually those who describe him as such have in mind his emphasis upon the primacy of epistemology, the foundational structure of this and also his dualistic account of the mind–body relation. However, in ridding general ontology

of the notions of natural kinds and purposes he was also bringing to an end an ancient teleological approach to value in general and to human values and ethics in particular. Without an anchor in the idea of a natural *telos* the notion of virtue drifts free, and is easily submerged amidst the turbulence created by general moral scepticism. And the latter, of course, was precisely what Hume promoted in the famous passage from the *Treatise* where he writes:

> . . . 'tis necessary that it should be observed and explained; and at the same time that a reason should be given, for what seems altogether inconceivable, how this new relation [of *ought* or *ought not*] can be a deduction from others [*is* or *is not*] which are entirely different from it . . . and [I] am persuaded, that this small attention would subvert all the vulgar systems of morality, and let us see, that the distinction of vice and virtue is not founded merely on the relations of objects, nor is perceived by reason.[21]

Hume's problem as it arises for anyone seeking to obtain prescription for action from information about the human constitution comes in two stages. The first concerns the attempt to derive norms from facts of nature (the *fact–value* gap) and the second bears upon the task of proceeding from statements of value to ones of requirement (the *is* (good)–*ought* (to be done) gap). Setting aside the issue of absolute obligations, which *may* present an intractable problem for ethical naturalism,[22] I think the second stage of Hume's problem is almost wholly untroublesome. That Hume and Humeans think it a problem is due to their unduly narrow conception of reasoning. As so often, Hume first presents a restrictive account of some central concept, in this case of *Rationality* – as 'abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number' and 'experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence',[23] and then challenges his readers to see how this concept could possibly have the breadth of application they ordinarily ascribe to it.

However, the idea that there can be reasoning about how one ought to act, i.e. *Practical Rationality,* is an ancient and coherent one. According to the type of view I am propounding the relevant subject matter of such reasoning is the good for man. And the connection between judging something to be good and concluding that, other things being equal, one ought to act so as to achieve it is an *internal* one. That is to say, in the domain of practical reasoning to assent to a value judgement, is among other things, to be disposed to act upon it. This is not an empirical psychological thesis but a philosophical one about the very nature of valuation and action.

In Aquinas' writings this point about the inseparability of evaluation and prescriptivity is demonstrated by reference to the notion of *Synderesis.* This is an innate practical disposition directed towards the achievement of natural well-being. It is characterisable in the form of the first principle of practical reason ('*primum principium in ratione practica*') which Aquinas states as follows: Good is to be done and pursued and evil avoided ('*Bonum est faciendum et prosequendum et malum vitandum*'). It is especially important to recall that 'good' (and 'evil') is in this use not restricted to moral

contexts. The point is simply that conceiving of something under a 'desirability characterisation' ('*ratio boni*') is a necessary, though not sufficient, condition of being engaged in action. Purposeful behaviour, as opposed to mere bodily movement (or inertia), is specified by its object, which stands as a goal to be realised. Thus, Aquinas' *Synderesis* principle is not a piece of moral advice. Rather, it states a constitutive element of the domain of practice. As such, it may be compared with a principle such as: truth is to be believed and investigated and falsehood disbelieved, subscription to which is presupposed in the characterisation of something as a *theoretical* judgement.

The second stage of Hume's problem, the supposed gap between evaluation and prescription (*is* good–*ought* to be done), aims to make trouble for teleological ethics by claiming that there is no logical or rational connection between judging that something is a potential object of satisfaction of a need and judging that it ought to be sought after. But this fails to recognise that, in the practical domain, there is an intrinsic connection between holding something to be desirable (i.e. worthwhile) and being rationally disposed to secure it. For, from the point of view of the agent or practical deliberator, to conceive of X as desirable *is* to conceive of it as something to be obtained, again other things being equal. Of course, the agent may be mistaken. It may be (given the naturalistic account of value) that what he desires is not, in fact, desirable (worthwhile). But if he comes to recognise this he will, *ipso facto* (and assuming rationality), cease to be disposed towards it. Since, to repeat, in the domain of practical reasoning evaluation is intrinsically related to prescription. In short, there is no *is–ought* gap.

Returning at this point to the account of value and virtue as relating to the promotion of human well-being, I consider a possibility which emerges as an account of the special prescriptive force of moral judgements. In his catalogue of practical principles, Kant first distinguishes between *hypothetical* and *categorical* imperatives and then draws a distinction within the former class between those which are *assertoric* and others which are *problematic*.[25] The second sort are what are usually referred to in discussions of whether morality is a system of hypothetical imperatives. These ascribe value to actions conditionally upon an agent's having a purpose which he may as easily lack. Assertoric hypotheticals, by contrast, are concerned with actual purposes not merely possible ones. Accordingly, one class of assertoric imperatives might have the general form: necessarily you seek what is good, therefore you ought to do such and such. But this is just what a teleological theory of the kind discussed would yield, with the particular contents being determined by reference to factors constitutive of human well-being. The prescriptive authority of morality is, therefore, no more or less than that of the facts. But it is unsurprising that their presentation in ethical judgements engages our interests and emotions in ways not paralleled in theoretical enquiry. First, because they feature in a practical context, in which the question: 'What ought I to do?' is presupposed. Secondly, because they concern our well-being.

So much for the transition from valuation to prescription. What of the first stage of the Humean problem, the fact–value gap? Here I can be brief, for the real point at issue concerns the status of the relevant facts, and that becomes a question about the tenability of a teleological metaphysics. Hume and those who follow him think of nature as a

collection of contingently related objects spread out in space and time. And so they conceive of the corresponding descriptions of the world as 'copulations of propositions *is* and *is not*'. Nowhere in such a science are there statements of natural perfections, of tendencies towards these, of prerequisites for the effective exercise of such tendencies or of species-specific constituents of organic well-being. It is no wonder, then, that Humeans cannot discover values in facts of nature. For, once again, they have so restricted the relevant concepts – here those of *science* and *nature* – as to beg the question of whether an objective theory of value can be founded in a science of man. By contrast, it is clear that if it is legitimate to describe parts of the natural order, and human-kind in particular, in terms of inbuilt teleologies, characteristic capacities, directed strivings and so on, then implicit in these descriptions are standards, norms or values relating to them. The key class of relevant evaluative notions being those concerned with the achievement of functional excellences. As before, the Humean challenge is met by reflecting upon our established patterns of description and upon the non-contingent relationships holding between facts, values and prescriptions.

As I remarked, however, the remaining point now at issue may be reformulated as a disagreement about the possibility of natural teleology. My recent rejoinder to the Humean objection can be summarised as the claim that the correct metaphysics of human nature is partly normative in virtue of man's having a proper pattern of development and perfection. In this I am simply following Aristotle and Aquinas. The smart rejoinder will doubtless be that in doing so I am following them into the philosophical wilderness, since teleology has long since been refuted.

The objection that ethical naturalism fails on this score is frequently advanced. It is a feature of Williams's recent challenge to the attempt to found an objective morality on the idea of well-being.[26] And even an author of neo-Aristotelian persuasions, Alastair MacIntyre, who seeks to construct a virtue-based ethics, himself disavows Aristotle's own foundation of teleological metaphysics in favour of a sociological alternative.[27] Here I cannot consider the details of these authors' very interesting discussions of Aristotelian ethics and will only address the general issue of whether teleological metaphysics is still credible.

Let me say, directly, that one can reject most of Aristotelian and Thomistic natural science while still retaining a teleological view. How is this possible? Well, for one thing the introduction of scientific explanations involving efficient causation, or more recently transitional functions, is compatible with teleological explanations. Paley thought it obvious that an object of such precision and utility of operation as a watch could only be an artefact. But whether such things are only ever products of design or may occur naturally, one can give an informative account of their operation *qua* objects of a certain determinate sort in terms of the function of time-keeping. And the propriety of such an account is not challenged by there also being true descriptions of the various mechanisms formulated wholly in terms of efficient causes.

Following on from this, I want to suggest that in general teleological and certain other types of description and explanation are often complementary inasmuch as while the former are concerned with the nature and activity of members of sortal kinds of species, the latter

concern the structure and pattern of sub-substantial parts and events. In respect of human beings, this thought is coincident with that proposed towards the end of the previous section where I argued that psychological explanations are focused upon *persons* and not their bodies (which stand to them as constitutive matter). Similarly, I suggest that teleology is part of the observational core of our everyday self-understanding, whereas the non-teleological characterisations – *where these can ever be constructed!* – originate in theoretical hypotheses as to the mechanisms underlying the characteristic activities of living persons and other animals.[28]

There are people. They have common natures. Given these facts, there is a determinate range of ways of living which are worth pursuing. And inasmuch as the purpose of education is to promote the good life for human beings there is accordingly an objective basis for deliberating about the form and content of their education.[29]

V

In the last section I considered and replied to an interpretation of Peters's objection that there is no generally accepted purpose of education. This treated his claim as a philosophical one connected with the rejection of objective teleology. However, it might instead be understood as a sociological observation to the effect that there is no common agreement – indeed there is social disagreement – as to the proper aim of education. This is, of course, compatible with there being a truth of the matter and with it being much as I have argued for above. How, then, can the *sociological* observation constitute a *philosophical* objection to anything which I have proposed? I shall conclude with a few brief comments on this issue.

The problem which might now suggest itself derives not from metaphysics or epistemology but from political philosophy. More particularly it originates in philosophical liberalism. The liberal idea is that the principles which prescribe the structure and operation of general public institutions, and which shape public policy, cannot be philosophically controversial if such institutions and policies are to receive recognition and respect from those whose lives they regulate. This idea has recently been discussed and defended by Rawls in connection with justice. He writes as follows:

> . . . a conception of the person in a political view . . . need not involve, so I believe, questions of philosophical psychology or a metaphysical doctrine of the nature of the self. No political view that depends on these deep and unresolved matters can serve as a public conception of justice in a constitutional democratic state.[30]

I do not believe that Rawls himself is successful in showing that his own account of justice is free of controversial metaphysical presuppositions,[31] but the more important point is whether the foundations of social policy must be philosophically neutral in the required sense. The relevance of this question in the present context is obvious enough. Education has long been a central preoccupation of public policy and, in recent times

especially, the role of government in shaping the school curriculum has increased considerably. Setting aside the details of any actual legislation the abstract philosophical question is this: can it be legitimate to impose a scheme of education on the basis of a metaphysical view of persons and their perfection?

As contemporary political philosophers such as Rawls and Dworkin[32] understand the core of liberalism, the involvement of controversial assumptions disqualifies a view from serving as the basis of public policy. Assuming one finds features of that outlook attractive, while not yielding to it in its pure uncompromising form, one might still hope to effect a compromise by conceding something of the specificity of one's view of persons and, by implication, of their education to more general and yet more pluralistic conceptions.

However, that response risks leading to the effective abandonment of any distinctive idea of the purposes of education. So instead one might do better to consider whether, far from its being the case that a public conception and associated policies may not invoke doctrines of philosophical psychology and metaphysics, the actual truth of the matter is that it is *only* by reference to these that any educationally justifiable public policy can be constructed. This is a thought which requires further exploration before it can be assessed, but it is also the one on which I shall end, having set out at some length my own view of how metaphysics has a place in the philosophy of education.

Notes

1. This is the text of a paper presented to the Annual Conference of the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain held at the Froebel Institute College, London, in Spring 1989. I am grateful to my hosts on that occasion.

2. See, for example, the following: R.F. Dearden (1982) Philosophy of education 1952–82, *British Journal of Educational Studies,* 30, pp. 57–71; John Harris (1983) Recent work in the philosophy of education, *The Philosophical Quarterly,* 33, pp. 202–7; D.W Hamlyn (1985) Need philosophy of education be so dreary?, *Journal of Philosophy of Education,* 19, pp. 159–65; and David E. Cooper (1986) Introduction, in: *Education, Values and Mind: Essays for R.S. Peters,* pp. 4–7 (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul).

3. For some suggestions as to how and where philosophy of education should now proceed see Harris, *op. cit.*; James Walker and Colin Evers (1984) Towards a materialist pragmatist philosophy of education, *Education Research and Perspectives,* 11, pp. 23–31; John White (1987) The medical condition of philosophy of education, *Journal of Philosophy of Education,* 21, pp. 155–62; Brenda Almond (1987) New directions in the philosophy of education, in: B. Almond (ed.) *Moral Concerns,* pp. 57–67 (New Jersey, Humanities Press); and the various contributions to the Special Topic number of *Educational Philosophy and Theory* (1987) 19, on post-analytical philosophy of education.

4. See *Metaphysics,* 1036a 28–9; 096 25–6; but especially 1086b 2–7.

5. Of particular relevance is Aquinas' use of the principle as a method of investigating the nature of the human soul, i.e. of man's characteristic powers. See *Aristotle's De Anima with the Commentary of St Thomas Aquinas* translated by K. Foster and S. Humphries

(1951), Book II, Ch. IV, Lectio 6, pp. 304–8 (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul). The relevant application of the principle is to be found in the part of Aristotle's text upon which Aquinas is commenting, i.e. II, 4, 415a 14–20.

6. J.C. Walker and C.W. Evers (1984) Towards a materialist pragmatist philosophy of education, *op. cit.*

7. See various of the essays in 'Post-analytic philosophy of education', *Educational Philosophy and Theory* (1987), 19(2).

8. See Walker and Evers, *op. cit.,* pp. 25, 31. Compare the remarks about the 'serious gaps' in analytical philosophy of education with Cooper's observations in *Education, Values and Mind, op. cit.,* p. 6.

9. *Summa Theologiae* (1915) Ia, IIae, Q49a4 (London, Washbourne).

10. *Summa Theologiae,* Ia, IIae, Q55a1.

11. In speaking of their 'proper application' I am deliberately avoiding the issue of whether ethical naturalism of the sort proposed should claim to be giving an account of the *intensions* or *senses* of moral concepts or restrict itself to the claim that it is delineating their *extensions* or *referents.* The issue is an important one but cannot be addressed here.

12. See *Authority, Responsibility and Education* (1963), p. 83 and following (London, Allen & Unwin).

13. For some, rather limited, discussion of this, see Gregory Mellema (1983) An Aristotelian approach to thinking about educational aims, *New Scholasticism,* LVII, pp. 362–74.

14. Valina Raimer (1987) Physicalism, realism and education: a functionalist approach. *Educational Philosophy and Theory,* 19, *op. cit.,* pp. 47, 49, 50.

15. Walker and Evers (1984) Towards a materialist pragmatist philosophy of education, *op. cit.,* p. 30.

16. Walker (1987) Naturalism and the philosophy of education, *Educational Philosophy and Theory,* 19, pp. 11–21.

17. See Wilfred Sellars (1963) Empiricism in the philosophy of mind, in: W. Sellars (ed.) *Science, Perception and Reality,* Sections XII–XV (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul).

18. See J. Haldane (1988) Folk psychology and the explanation of human behaviour, *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume LXII,* pp. 223–54. This is a contribution to a symposium under the same title, the other symposiast in which is Paul Churchland. Our exchange is set to continue in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society,* Vol. LXXX, forthcoming.

19. See Haldane (1988) Folk psychology and the explanation of human behaviour, *op. cit.,* Section III.

20. For a somewhat un-self-critical, but nonetheless interesting, discussion of this issue see Henry B. Veatch (1984) Philosophy, thou art in a parlous state, in: Victor Brezik (ed.) *Thomistic Papers I,* pp. 9–44 (Houston, Center for Thomistic Studies).

21. Selby Bigge (ed.) (1949) *A Treatise of Human Nature,* Book III Part (i), Section (i) (Oxford, Clarendon Press).

22. They were thought to do so by some of the leading mediaeval writers. For a brief account of this see J. Haldane (1989) Voluntarism and realism in mediaeval ethics, *Journal of Medical Ethics,* 15, pp. 39–47. See also Elizabeth Anscombe (1981) Modern moral

philosophy, in: G.E.M. Anscombe (ed.) *Collected Papers,* Vol. III, pp. 26–42 (Oxford, Blackwell) for a contemporary statement of this worry.

23. See Selby Bigge (ed.) (1951) *Enquiries* (Oxford, Clarendon Press): *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding,* Section XII, Part III.

24. Summa Theologiae, Ia, IIae, Q94a2.

25. H.J. Paton (ed. and translator) (1976) *The Moral Law: Kant's groundwork of the metaphysics of morals,* Ch. II, Classification of Imperatives, p. 78 (London, Hutchinson).

26. See B. Williams (1985) *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy,* Ch. 3 (London, Collins).

27. See A MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (1981), Ch. 12 (London, Duckworth).

28. For some further discussion relevant to this see Haldane (1988) Folk psychology and the explanation of human behaviour, *op. cit.,* Section VI.

29. I have not addressed the objection voiced by Williams (*op. cit.*) and others that even if Aristotle's metaphysical biology, or something equivalent to it, could be reinstated it would underdetermine the good life for man conceived of in full specificity and as particularised to each individual. The issue is too large to embark upon here but two comments are in order. First, it is no part of the view being proposed to claim that all values and virtues are determined by man's biological nature independently of and prior to his life in historically situated societies. Secondly, the emphasis on individual fulfilment implicit in the objection is indeed in tension with the Aristotelian view. For the latter is concerned with the good man *qua kind* of (rational) animal. But this point of difference cannot be resolved independently of a general assessment of modern individualism.

30. See J. Rawls (1985) Justice as fairness: political not metaphysical, *Philosophy and Public Affairs,* 14, pp. 230–1.

31. I have tried to demonstrate why this is so in: An ineliminable metaphysical presupposition in the theory of justice (unpublished). For some discussion of these issues relevant to aspects of the present topic see J. Haldane (1985) Individuals and the theory of justice, *Ratio,* 27, pp. 189–96.

32. See R. Dworkin (1986) Liberalism, in: Dworkin (ed.) *A Matter of Principle,* pp. 181–204 (Oxford, Clarendon).

ANALYTIC AND POST-ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION: METHODOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS

Colin W. Evers

Twenty years ago Abraham Edel (1973: this volume, p. 39) argued that analytic philosophy of education (APE), then the dominant model in the United Kingdom, Australasia and, to a lesser extent, the United States, was 'at the crossroads'. The intervening period has witnessed a further accumulation of problems for analysis and a flourishing of alternatives. In what follows, I distinguish two main strands of analytic methodology, some post-analytic alternatives, and the varied fortunes of and prospects for each.

Analytic philosophy of education

Philosophers of education are given to making pronouncements on a range of substantive educational issues: the nature of education, teaching, and learning; curriculum content and worthwhile knowledge; moral education; cognitive development; school organisation and administration; educational policy; and educational research methodology, to name just some of the major themes. To help focus discussion, I take the important background question to be how we could ever know whether any of these pronouncements are warranted. The epistemological question is important because the approaches to philosophy of education I shall be considering offer different answers. Moreover, differences over epistemology will signal more systematic differences over philosophy of education in general.

Before the rise of APE in the late 1950s, it was fashionable among philosophers of education to attempt to *deduce* educational claims from philosophical premises. As the 1942 and 1955 *National Society for the Study of Education* yearbooks indicate, philosophy of education was something of a smorgasbord, with characteristic educational positions being associated with particular philosophical 'isms', such as empiricism, existentialism,

rationalism, pragmatism, and so on (Brubacher, 1942, 1955). Waiving the matter of defending one ism over another, success was construed as establishing the existence of *educational implications*. Ismism, as it was unkindly termed, fell on hard times in the mid 1950s after a vigorous 'implications' debate, conducted largely in *Educational Theory* and the *Harvard Educational Review,* prompted a consensus that the quest for educational implications had failed and that the enterprise was mistaken. (The main papers can be found in Lucas, 1969.)

Although technical worries over the nature of implication were extensively canvassed, the most important determinant of the new consensus, and its subsequent development, was a new view of the nature of philosophy. For arising out of the so-called linguistic revolution in philosophy, particularly the Ordinary Language variety associated with Oxford philosophy, came the view that philosophy should be construed as an *activity* rather than a body of claims from which deductions might be made. The philosophical activity most characteristic of APE, early and late, is the analysis of concepts, although latter day examples are mostly in disguise, often as exegesis of some theorist (e.g. White, 1990, on Aristotle) or some established educational practice (e.g. Wenham, 1991, on teaching). For example, in his influential paper 'Towards an Analytic Philosophy of Education' Scheffler (1954: 9) recommends construing philosophy of education as 'the rigorous logical analysis of key concepts related to the practice of education'. In answering his own question about the main concerns of philosophy of education, Peters (1966: 18) remarks: 'There is, first of all, the analysis of concepts specific to education – such as "education", "teaching", "training", and "university", and "school"'. And, despite subsequent criticisms of the methods of conceptual analysis, a quick check of recent papers in the field's journals shows Barrow (1991) analysing 'critical thinking', Gaden (1990) analysing 'responsibility', McLaughlin (1990) analysing 'belief', and Harvey (1990) analysing 'stereotype', to mention just a few of the fairly conspicuous examples.

Construed modestly, conceptual analysis serves the always important and useful function of distinguishing uses of terms, sorting out ambiguities, and in general clarifying what is being claimed. Often associated with an anti-essentialist interpretation of the later Wittgenstein, it captures the idea of philosophy as linguistic therapy (see Strawson, 1992: 3–14). Except where educational theory falls into a chronic ambiguity of expression and sloppiness of usage, the impact of modest analysis has been, as one might expect, modest.

Construed more ambitiously (by using the tools of modest analysis) two related approaches to conceptual analysis have been employed in APE to justify substantive educational claims. The first sees the analysis of concepts as a quest for *logically* necessary and sufficient conditions of usage or, where these are difficult to obtain, at least logically necessary conditions. Thus, if an analysis of usage suggests that we would not say of someone that they were being educated unless they were learning something worthwhile, then 'Education involves the learning of something worthwhile' expresses a conceptual truth (see e.g. Hirst and Peters, 1970: 2–28). The aim of such a philosophy of education is to produce a comprehensive set of conceptual truths about education. These conceptual

truths are meant to provide a kind of intellectual scaffolding for educational theory, around which empirical claims are added. The APE developed by Richard Peters, Paul Hirst, and other philosophers of education who plied their trade at the London Institute of Education during the 1960s and beyond, clearly displays this version of analysis. (For recent book-length versions see e.g. Barrow and Woods, 1988; Callan, 1988; and Hamm, 1989.)

The second ambitious view of analytic methodology sees analysis as a quest for the basic *presuppositions* of knowledge. Applied to education, this methodology looks for what substantive educational claims might be presupposed by *any* educational theorising. And once again it was the London Institute philosophers of education who led the way in employing the methodology most systematically and to greatest effect. Thus Hirst's influential forms of knowledge thesis owes much to an analysis of what is presupposed in having a mind. For example, 'the phrase, to have "a rational mind" certainly implies experience structured under some form of conceptual scheme' (Hirst, 1965: this volume, p. 254). Similarly, Peters's view of what to choose as worthwhile activities in education is based on an analysis of the logical presuppositions of rational, disinterested choice (Peters, 1966: 151–66).

The above ambitious versions of analysis are related, in the first instance, according to how 'presupposition' is construed. Interpreting the ambiguous expression 'S entails S' as 'S is a necessary condition for the truth of S', 'presupposition' may mean no more than 'is a necessary condition for the truth of S', in which case the two become one. On Strawson's (1952: 175) usage, 'presupposition' means 'is a necessary condition for the truth or falsity of S'. Further permutations are possible according to how 'entails' is understood, though ironically, any further taxonomy risks outrunning the actual conduct of analysis in the literature. In any case, it is clear that claims to have established conceptual truths about education, or to have discovered the logical presuppositions of an inclusive range of educational discourse, can (and did) exert considerable purchase on substantive educational theorising. The rewards of success were the familiar ones: acknowledged standing as a separate branch of educational studies, akin to history or sociology of education, the proliferation of professional journals, and the establishment of learned societies.

Criticisms of analytic methodology

Three methodological criticisms of APE have been particularly important in pointing the way to post-analytic alternatives in philosophy of education. The first, widely felt in analysis and articulated by Edel (1973: this volume, p. 40), is epistemic: 'A central difficulty in analytic philosophy of education seems to me to reflect a soft spot in the analytic theory generally – how to judge what is a correct or adequate analysis.' Edel locates the difficulty in APE's heritage from positivism: an untenable distinction between analytic (or conceptual) and synthetic (or empirical) claims. By the early 1970s, Edel was in good company, for the analytic/synthetic distinction had sustained damaging criticism from Quine (1951, 1960) and conspicuous appeal to analyticity had greatly

diminished as a ground for the justification of claims in mainstream, Anglo-American, philosophy. Indeed, its lingering influence in philosophy of education was something of an anomaly.

With appeal to analyticity disallowed, the structure of justification changes. Take, for example, the defence of S: 'Teaching is an activity conducted with the intention of bringing about learning.' Instead of engaging in the usual meaning analysis of 'teaching' in order to establish a case for conceptual truth of S, we can view S as providing the most immediate context for understanding the conceptual role of 'teaching'. But relevant context extends beyond S to other related sentences: S is embedded in some theory, T. Defending S now becomes a matter of arguing the epistemic case for T against rivals. Although theory choice has its problems it has considerably more resources for decision than meaning analysis. Note that in formulating the problem of justification in this manner a move has been made against merely assuming the epistemic privilege of ordinary language and its embedded commonsense theory of the world (see Evers, 1979).

A second problem lies with the provision of necessary conditions for the correct use of a term. While analytic philosophers of education might be willing to concede on sufficient conditions, it is important to hold the line on necessary conditions. So, to Wittgenstein's anti-essentialist charge that, for example, there is no common feature to all games (which would undermine the condition that the presence of such a feature is a necessary condition for something to be called a game), Hirst and Peters (1970: 6) respond that he overlooked something: 'A necessary conditon of calling something a game is, surely, that it is an activity which is indulged in non-seriously.' One need not have played poker for oil wells, on a Mississippi riverboat, to query the 'surely'. In response, analysts might want to distinguish two concepts: a fun one for those whose sense of propriety prevails, and a more serious one suitable for higher stakes. But now, is the sentence 'a game is an activity indulged in non-seriously' a conceptual truth, or even a truth? Well, once we begin to factor in the relevant social, cultural, and geographical factors that specify the surrounding theoretical context in which each use of 'game' figures, the epistemic sense of the question either drops out altogether, becomes relativised to prevailing local contexts, or becomes a matter of theory competition. And the same conditions of justification will apply to distinctions between so-called central and peripheral uses of 'game', or 'education', or 'teaching', or 'learning'.

Since the presence of necessary conditions of usage in a sufficiently restricted domain is equivalent to their absence in a broader domain we can ask whether consideration of domain size really matters in explaining how humans can master and readily employ concepts (or use terms). According to Stephen Stich (1992: 248–50), who appeals to empirical work in the psychology of concept acquisition, the answer is no. To appreciate the relevance of empirical conditions, consider an example. A small child is playing with a stick which at first is a gun, then a sword, then a walking stick, and finally a golf club. Analytic ways of thinking might suggest that these things all have something in common – perhaps that length exceeds breadth. Well, this is true of every solid object in the universe that is not

perfectly symmetrical. Moreover, guns can contract smoothly on their major axis without lapsing in gunhood, and likewise for swords, and even walking sticks. Perhaps the child's imagination is not constrained by affine invariance (maintenance of proportion), or topological invariance (maintenance of boundaries).

Given that language – which is quite grainy, discrete, and finite at the level of vocabulary – is being used to describe a world that is infinitely partitionable, one would expect cognitive advantages to accrue to creatures whose learning permits plasticity of feature detection. But to meet this condition, it is better to see concepts as the result of categorisation by *similarity to a prototype,* or alternatively, *similarity to an exemplar,* where neither prototypes (the most typical members of a set) nor exemplars (the most familiar) satisfy anything like necessary or sufficient conditions (see Stich, 1992: 249).

It is customary in APE to analyse the nature of human cognition and knowledge through its products, which are invariably taken to be rule-based symbol systems, from natural languages and informal sign systems through to the artificial systems of logic, mathematics, and computing. Certainly, a belief in rules underlying performance would lend credence to the otherwise quite brittle and implausible demands of analysis. However, when it comes to explaining the human *learning* of these competencies, it is important nowadays to attend to theories of brain functioning (see Grossberg, 1982). But from a neutral perspective, categorisation and concept formation (and, more controversially, reasoning) are better seen as products of pattern recognition and processing – processes characteristically driven by the application of soft constraints – rather than as being rule-based with precise conditions of application (see Bechtel and Abrahamson, 1991: 220–54; Evers, 1990.)

Notice that analytic methodology needs to challenge more than the *truth value* of these psychological reflections. In maintaining a conceptual/empirical distinction, it needs to challenge their *relevance.* The task of meshing a theory of conceptual analysis with a theory of concept acquisition was attempted in the early APE literature – and most clearly seen in the writings of Peters (1974: 119– 50) – by a shift in favour of Piagetian stage theories (shorn of their empirical excrescences).

The last major criticism raises the question of whose concepts are being analysed. It is important, because various answers strike at the assumption of epistemic privilege analysis allots to ordinary usage. For example, theories which see ordinary language as an *ideology* functioning to reproduce capitalist economic social relations of production, will count almost all the APE claims to conceptual truth as the most central falsehoods of a systematically false theory of education. (The best early critiques along these lines are Adelstein, 1972, and Harris, 1977.) More generally, the concepts of those for whom language is actually a structured misrepresentation of reality will not bear the epistemic weight required to justify educational claims. So gender theorists, for example, who see familiar discursive practices as gendered and part of the male symbolic order, would place little value in ambitious versions of analysis (see Davies, 1989).

A more drastic depature from analysis is to deny the possibility of a preferred knowledge of the semantics of language, and standards of rationality, sufficient to give sentence tokens

the stable representational structure required for what are in any case debatable demands of educational justification. Rorty's (1979: 357– 94) account of philosophy without mirrors (and some of the literature of post-modernism) raises the option. In what follows, I shall canvass benign rather than drastic post-analytic consequences for philosophy of education.

Some post-analytic alternatives

Philosophy of education has always contained alternatives to APE. Phenomenology and existentialism, for example, have long been important influences on educational theorising. (See Vandenberg, 1987, for an overview, and the critical discussions by Greene, 1987, and Small, 1987.)

However, to illustrate consequences of the above methodological concerns with APE, I shall focus on two post-analytic developments: naturalism, and critical theory. Although markedly different in their substantive educational theory, methodologically they share a purported anti-essentialism that goes with a rejection of the category of conceptual truth, and an anti-foundationalism that challenges traditional patterns of epistemic justification (including the epistemic value of APE's primary linguistic data).

Naturalism

I shall talk about naturalism first since, in the company of Jim Walker and Gabriele Lakomski, that is the position I have been most concerned to develop, and it will serve as a basis for subsequent comments on critical theory. (See Evers, 1987, for an overview; also Walker and Evers, 1984; Walker 1988; Evers and Lakomski, 1991; Lakomski, 1991. For a recent criticism of 'Australian Naturalism' see Haldane, 1989.) Broadly speaking, the position is a development of the Deweyan pragmatist tradition, reflecting particularly the influence of Quine, and more recently the naturalism of the Churchlands (1986, 1989).

To see some of its methodological features, let us begin by accepting as unproblematic the demand for knowledge justification, and ask how we could ever reasonably believe some educational claim, S. Naturalism denies the strategy of locating S within an epistemically privileged set of claims (which sometimes functions as a foundation for knowledge), principally because it denies there is any epistemically privileged way of doing this. Thus, if analytic statements are reckoned as privileged then the point of the exercise lapses if the theory used for making the demarcation and assigning S to its appropriate set is not itself analytic. And the same applies to sensory foundations where the theory of sensory epistemic merit is not itself a sensory experience. The demand that a theory of knowledge should come out knowable by its own criteria, that it should not outrun its own posited resources, is not a very strong requirement, but it is an instance of assuming simplicity and comprehensiveness, features of global coherence, as epistemic

virtues. By supposing theories of knowledge to be fallible and informed by matters empirical, contributions from perception, cognitive science, neuroscience, physics, social psychology, sociology, and history (to select a few relevant sources) can place further constraints on the structure of justification. For naturalists, the result is a shift towards holism and coherence patterns of justification.

The defence of S therefore becomes a matter of deciding whether S is part of the most coherent global theory we can construct. Naturalism is doing substantive work because of its demand that the most coherent global theory should also include our best natural science. The demand is, of course, provisional, being based on the conjecture that arguments for the exclusion of science are less epistemically secure than the science they seek to exclude. But this needs to be adjudicated in each case, for each rival theory, and on epistemic criteria – arguably coherence criteria – that are touchstone to the dispute.

A quick review of positions taken on a number of issues will give an indication of key elements of a naturalistic theory of education. Against Hirst's forms of knowledge thesis it has been argued, following Quine, that knowledge is a seamless web (Evers and Walker, 1983). The case is detailed, but one feature is methodologically instructive. Hirst's criteria for partitioning knowledge are quite abstract, partly because they need to apply to all knowledge. But in being so abstract – e.g. tests against experience, distinctive vocabulary, logical structure – they fail to do any work unless interpreted. However, what is admitted as a valid interpretation is precisely that which partitions knowledge in the required way. So Hirst's task shifts to providing a justification for the required interpretation. Of course, he never actually undertakes such a task, since he assumes the epistemic privilege of our ordinary understandings of the ways of language, which enable us to just see that there are different kinds of true knowledge claims – our conceptual scheme which structures experience. Indeed, even acknowledging there is a task would threaten the fragile consensus on which so much analysis relies.

A further extension of the unity thesis has involved arguing for the epistemological unity of educational research against a prevailing paradigms perspective. A piecemeal argument requires an examination of the inferential structure of different so-called paradigms. For example, how can traditional quantitative research methodology deliver reliable knowledge about certain educational phenomena, given serious weaknesses in its underlying empiricist epistemology? Answer: by tacitly drawing on *other* additional coherence criteria of justification, such as simplicity, consistency, and comprehensiveness. An examination of qualitative methodologies suggests a similar epistemic structure prevails, thus blurring the familiar quantitative/qualitative distinction (see Walker and Evers, 1988; Evers, 1991; and Lakomski, 1991).

Naturalism has also been extended to ethics where, following Dewey, a set of values has been defended on the ground that it provides the ethical infrastructure for promoting the social relations of inquiry, problem solving, or the growth of knowledge, in turn an arguably touchstone primary good (Evers, 1987). Naturalistic accounts of ethics are often thought to be vulnerable to the criticism that they commit the 'naturalistic fallacy' – the

so-called fallacy of defining a supposedly non-natural property like good, in terms of natural qualities. However, in its usual formulations, the standard of definition being used is analytic truth. Once this standard is waived, the virtues of definition are more a matter of theoretical parsimony resulting from changes in the conceptual role of ethical terms, a standard which applies to other central theoretical terms.

Issues of human subjectivity also take on a characteristic slant from the naturalistic perspective. For example, despite its formidable practical everyday utility and predictive power, folk psychology and its familiar folk-theoretical, commonsense categories of belief and desire, intention and meaning, have a provisional status, with the expectation that deeper accounts of language, thought, learning, knowledge, and purposeful behaviour will need to mesh with the developing neurosciences. The naturalist programme in philosophy of education contains some preliminary explorations of neural network representations of knowledge and cognition, in an effort to cash out the 'meshing' metaphor (see Evers, 1990).

In keeping with the broader idea of philosophy of education as being philosophy applied across the full range of educational studies, ironically perhaps the most systematic presentation of naturalism is to be found in Evers and Lakomski's (1991) *Knowing Educational Administration,* where naturalistic and coherentist strictures are extended into administrative and organisational theory, policy analysis, ethics, and research methodology, as part of an argument for a new science of administration.

Most recently, Walker (1992) has entered the policy debate over competency-based education by arguing against the partitioning of knowledge into behaviourally discrete skilled performances. One point he makes is that the manifestation of skills assumes 'situational understanding' – a grasp of the appropriateness of context. But since contexts can vary arbitrarily, a more general cognitive perspective is required for the *framing* of skilled performance.

The above examples should give some sense of the scope, at least, of current progress in Australian naturalism.

Critical theory

Despite variations in emphasis, and even in substantive details, versions of critical theory in philosophy of education exhibit two main features. The first is an anti-foundational critique of science, and what purports to be scientific rationality, in favour of a broader view of knowledge with science as just one component. The second is a radical politics of schooling sustained by an ethics and a theory of capitalist societies (see e.g. Carr, 1983, 1989; Giroux, 1983; Kemmis *et al.,* 1983; Aronowitz and Giroux, 1991; Young, 1989). With the recent collapse of Soviet and Euro-communisms as against the comparative prosperity of commodity-producing market economies, critical theory is under pressure to become entirely detached from mode of production analyses of the state (resulting, perhaps, in a version of critical theory like Fay's, 1975 and 1987). So I shall waive consideration of theory of society and comment on knowledge and ethics.

Ultimately, the aim of a critical theory of education is to identify sources of social domination, oppression, and injustice and to promote the kind of individual and collective reflective practices necessary for human emancipation (Kemmis *et al.,* 1983: 9–10; Giroux, 1983: 28–33). However, the sources of even obvious economic and material disadvantage and inequality are not exclusively economic. Rather, shared theoretical perspective, sometimes in this context called 'ideology', plays a part. Critical theory identifies the ubiquity (or better, hegemony) of a certain belief in science and its methods as an important factor in the maintenance and reproduction of injustice. By accepting, as valid, narrow positivist accounts of science, scientific practice is construed as manipulative, technicist, and concerned with the control of nature. Moreover, by an associated partitioning of issues into those concerning means and those concerning ends, the positivist's sharp fact/value distinction ensures that scientific reasoning, concerned only with means, becomes detached from reflection on the values embedded in ends. We thus have the picture of much scientific management, research, and pedagogy presenting as a value-free exercise in the manipulation of variables, to produce well-theorised means for achieving unscrutinised goals.

The early work of Habermas provides a critical alternative to this picture. He claims that humans make knowledge claims with respect to three fundamental interests: 'The approach of the empirical–analytic sciences incorporates a *technical* cognitive interest; that of the historical–hermeneutic sciences incorporates a *practical* one; and the approach of critically oriented sciences incorporates [an] *emancipatory* cognitive interest' (Habermas, 1972: 308). Wilfred Carr (1983, 1989) is one philosopher of education to draw on this theory of knowledge to develop a critical educational science. Such a science would produce 'educative self-knowledge' that would reveal to practitioners their unquestioned assumptions and beliefs. It would employ 'ethically-informed dialectical reasoning' rather than the usual logically deductive reasoning. It would interpret education not as a natural phenomenon 'but as a historically-located and culturally embedded social practice' subject to ideological distortion and other constraints (Carr, 1989: 35).

Without going into the detail of this approach, notice that from the naturalist's perspective it trades on a discredited *theory* of natural science. Thus, if positivism's many claims about the nature of science are false, science and scientific reasoning may perhaps be better described by other theories – for example, postpositivist alternatives like naturalistic coherentism (which claims science can include values and human subjectivity). The possibility of alternatives signals a methodological hazard in trying to devise an epistemically defensible taxonomy for all knowledge. Either the taxonomy draws on the best knowledge under analysis, in which case that knowledge dominates the scene much as positivistically construed science did in the original problematic, or the taxonomy does not, in which case a less warranted theory of knowledge is being used to discount more warranted knowledge – such as science. The alleged middle path of quasi-transcendental deduction, or immanent critique (or, in analytic terms, the logic of presupposition), is indeed a rocky road, as Habermas now admits. (Young, 1990, contains an excellent discussion of this point. See also Evers and Lakomski, 1991: 13.)

A second strand of critical thinking (found, for example, in the work of R.E. Young, 1988, 1989, 1990) builds on Habermas's theory of communication, to provide important detail with regard to ethics and the social relations of education. Habermas's theory is complex, but the basic idea involves an analysis of what is presupposed for successful communication to be possible. Since teaching, or better teaching/learning, occurs through communication, its implicit normative constraints will be relevant to any characterisation of an appropriate pedagogy. Young (1988) uses these constraints to draw a distinction between education and indoctrination. Roughly speaking, educative communication requires the teacher's speech acts to be rationally criticisable by learners. The conditions for such rationality are the social relations which most approximate the ideal speech presupposed in all communication. These social relations reflect the assumptions that speech acts be comprehensible, that they have true propositional content, that the speaker aims for truthfulness (rather than deception), and that the acts be appropriate or right in the light of the hearer's norms (see McCarthy, 1978: 288). There is thus a premiun on the norms of equality of opportunity for making a contribution, and an absence of internal (e.g. psychological, ideological) and external (e.g. domination) constraints. For Young (1988: 59) 'critical pedagogy is the form interaction takes on when participants in a learning situation are mutually concerned with the development of each others' capacities to join in making validity judgments'.

From a methodological perspective, notice that once again some feature of the logic of presupposition is doing heavy work. But if we waive the option of exploiting conceptual analytic links between descriptions of the phenomena of communication and posited presuppositions, any extensionally equivalent set of antecedents will permit the derivation of appropriately described communicative practice. Since there is an infinite number of such sets, we winnow the field according to the usual coherence criteria of simplicity, comprehensiveness and, say, explanatory unity. Here the naturalist would urge coherence with the relevant natural science, for example the Shannon/Weaver mathematical theory of communication, which underwrites much of today's vast developments in information technology (see Dretske, 1981). This theory is able to provide rigorous accounts of the transmission, coding, and decoding of information on much weaker assumptions than those required for speech act theory. Thus, it does not assume the truth of communications, but merely the presence of statistical regularity; so systematic falsehood can convey as much information as systematic truth.

One response is to say that the above conclusion disqualifies information theory from giving an adequate account of *human* communication. But now we have a felicitous shift to substantive theoretical debate rather than to reflections on meaning and appeals to the commonsense assumptions embedded in ordinary language. For example, the information-processing properties of the central nervous system, and the patternings of natural speech and its contexts, become issues of legitimate focus.

Conclusion

A methodological shift to substantive theory in order to sustain the justification of educational claims is typical of the many post-analytic alternatives – e.g. naturalism, critical theory, feminism, political and cultural perspectives – in the literature, although appeals to relevant large-scale empirical theories have so far tended to transform issues rather than settle them. Nevertheless, in my view, this is where the real strength of post-analytic philosophy lies.

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Part II

EDUCATIONAL THEORY
AND PRACTICE

7

EDUCATIONAL THEORY

Paul H. Hirst

In my contribution to Professor J.W. Tibble's volume *The Study of Education*[1] I sought to characterize educational theory as a domain of practical theory, concerned with formulating and justifying principles of action for a range of practical activities. Because of their concern for practical principles I sharply distinguished domains of practical theory from domains concerned simply with purely theoretical knowledge. The function of the latter is primarily explanation. The function of the former is primarily the determination of practice. The one is concerned with achieving rational understanding, the other with achieving rational action. In this approach I was in major respects at variance with that set out several years previously by Professor D.J. O'Connor in his influential book *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education.*[2] He had argued that though the term 'theory' could be used for 'a set or system of rules or a collection of precepts which guide or control actions of various kinds',[3] it is better used as in the natural sciences for a hypothesis or logically inter-connected set of hypotheses that have been confirmed by observation. In this sense we have 'standards by which we can assess the value and use of any claimant to the title of ''theory''. In particular this sense of the word will enable us to judge the value of the various (and often conflicting) theories that are put forward by writers on education.'[4] He concluded: 'We can summarise this discussion by saying that the word "theory" as it is used in educational contexts is generally a courtesy title. It is justified only where we are applying well established experimental findings in psychology or sociology to the practice of education. And even here we should be aware that the conjectural gap between our theories and the facts on which they rest is sufficiently wide to make our logical consciences uneasy. We can hope that the future development of the social sciences will narrow this gap and this hope gives an incentive for developing these sciences.'[5] It seemed to me then, as it seems to me now, in spite of all Professor O'Connor says, critical for the development of educational practice that we hold hard to developing educational theory of a kind that is fully adequate to the nature of the educational enterprise. And to this end we should resist the

seductions of a much more limited paradigm of 'theory' taken from another area, however prestigious its claims.

The differences (and agreements) between myself and Professor O'Connor were sharpened in an exchange of papers between us subsequently published in *New Essays in the Philosophy of Education,* edited by G. Langford and D.J. O'Connor.[6] We agree that all theory is concerned with explanation, but to my mind the explanation of human activities in an area like education involves not only the sciences, including the social sciences, but also matters of beliefs and values. Reasons as well as causes enter into the business; mental concepts as well as the empirical concepts of the sciences are involved. If we agree acceptable theories are to be refutable, refutation is for me not confined to the form it takes in the sciences. We agree that educational theory is concerned with 'improving' and 'guiding' practice, but for me that is more than a technical matter for a scientific form of educational theory, on the assumption that the values involved come from outside the theory itself. Of course, if I insist that the debate of educational ends as well as means comes within the theory, because to my mind the development of rational practice demands that debate and because ends and means are not ultimately separable, I must accept that the theory must incorporate all the confusions of contemporary debate about values. I must accept too that at present the logic of practical reasoning is unclear and that the structure of educational theory is therefore uncertain. But I do not despair of our progressively making our educational practice more rationally defensible; indeed I think we are slowly doing that. What is more, I see no reason to think that the logic of practical reasoning will forever elude us. After all, the elucidation of the logic of discourse can only be discerned after the emergence of acceptable paradigms of the discourse. Even in scientific discourse that logic is still a matter of dispute, whilst in the practical domain acceptable sophisticated theories are still in the making.

This second debate with Professor O'Connor has left me unrepentant in seeing educational theory as primarily the domain which seeks to develop rational principles for educational practice. To this end it draws, of course, on all the theoretical knowledge available in the social sciences. Educational psychology and sociology of education are precisely those sub-areas of psychology and sociology that are of use in this way. But it also draws on history, philosophy and much else besides; all that is significant for the formulation and justification of its rational principles. And if educational theory is a composite area of this kind, I remain unrepentant in regarding its unity as the unity of a consistent set of principles of practice at which it aims, not that of one vast theoretical integration of the contributory disciplines.

By the early 1970s, however, it was becoming clear that even if this view of the nature of educational theory is accepted, much more has to be said about the way in which the contributory disciplines are related to practical principles. Developments at that time within these disciplines only served to accentuate their radically different characters and the limited significance of any one or even all of these domains in the formulation of practical principles. Each discipline, even when concerned with educational

practice, clearly has its own concepts, employing these to ask its own distinctive theoretical questions, questions that are essentially, say, philosophical, psychological or historical in nature and not practical. The conclusions reached in each area, however focused on matters of educational practice, are again philosophical, psychological or historical in character and are not themselves principles for practice. The disciplines cannot tackle any given practical questions as such for each tackles questions which are peculiar to itself, those that can be raised only within its own distinctive conceptual apparatus. Psychologists, sociologists or philosophers faced with any matter of practical policy on, say, the grouping of pupils in schools or the use of punishment, can legitimately comment only on different psychological, sociological or philosophical issues that may be at stake. The disciplines each make their own limited abstractions from the complexities of practice. They tackle no common problems of any kind and none of them is adequate to the proper determining of principles for educational practice. Indeed, there seems an inevitable gap between the conceptual framework within which the issues of practice arise and the conceptual frameworks that the distinct disciplines employ for their particular purposes. In seeking to characterise the relationship between the disciplines and the principles of educational theory, I have from the start referred to the disciplines as providing reasons, of many different kinds, for the principles. In this the disciplines are seen to be crucial for the justification of what is claimed in the theory. But how can such diverse, partial and limited theoretical studies ever provide a satisfactory justification for any set of practical principles? Even if the account I have given to date is satisfactory as far as it goes, it is certainly in need of further development.

In these early accounts of the nature of theory, uncertainty about what more might be said led to ambiguities that I now consider can be removed, at least to some significant extent. In particular, my view that the disciplines can provide justification for practical principles which in their turn justify particular educational activities in individual circumstances was interpreted by some in very simplistic ways that must surely be rejected. Taken as giving a methodology for developing rational educational practice, it is clear that this scheme, of proceeding from disciplines to principles to particular activities, simply will not work. As has already been indicated, the disciplines we have deal with certain aspects abstracted from complex practical situations, dealing with these in dissociation from each other. There is no reason whatever to suppose that these abstractions when put together begin to give any adequate understanding of the situation for practical purposes, or even that they ever could. What other new disciplines might come to contribute to our understanding we cannot at present know, but further, we are not able to see how such an array of disciplines can provide a comprehensive base for the determination of practical principles. It is not just that at present the disciplines we have are too undeveloped and full of disputes for such a method of developing principles to be workable, true though that is. It is rather that the very character of the disciplines seems such that they must prove inadequate as a basis for practical principles.

This approach is in fact simply one version of what Karl Popper labelled Utopian

social engineering[7] and is open to all the criticisms he voiced. It sees rational action as action decided on in separation from immediate experience and concrete situations, and then executed in particular circumstances. In this it assumes either that we can achieve a 'clean slate' on which we can write what we want or that we can achieve what we want no matter what the existing state of affairs. Such a degree of control over men and complex social circumstances is, however, quite illusory and the consequences of practical actions of any complexity are always in part unpredictable. For that reason alone this approach always tends in practice to the seeking of ever larger areas of planning and ever more determined efforts to control matters over longer periods of time. But the greater the scale of operation, the greater the scale of the unpredictable and the possible irrationality of the outcome. Popper himself advocated instead what he called piecemeal social engineering, in which we confine ourselves to small-scale operations where there are acknowledged deficiencies in our society. In such circumstances we can more readily adjust matters if things go wrong. Larger-scale changes can be made in the light of more modest experiments on a trial and error basis.

Yet for all his opposition to large-scale rationalism, Popper retains a sophisticated version of the same rationalist theory of action. Individuals act rationally to the extent that they understand each problem and respond to it in the terms it itself presents. A person's grasp of a problem is set in part by his society's institutions and traditions, but there is nothing here that is in principle incapable of being understood in the social and other sciences. (There may be unintended consequences to any rational action, but these too are capable of explanation in scientific terms.) My earlier criticisms question whether such rationalism is in principle possible even on a piecemeal scale. Does a practical situation present itself in terms that can be adequately understood from without, using the necessary disciplines? Or is its character determined much more subtly by factors that can only be understood by the practitioner from within this element of the life of the relevant society, with its institutions, traditions, beliefs and values? If, following Popper, educational theory is not to be seen as a form of Utopian social engineering, it is not clear that his picture of piecemeal social engineering is a correct account either. Maybe his idea of social engineering itself, whatever its scale, needs to be questioned because of the technological model it employs. It is far from obvious that in determining social issues the relationship between knowledge and rational action is the same as that which holds in determining engineering practices. In engineering, rational practice comes from an understanding that conforms to what is the case independently of human beings in a particular society's social system. In education, rational practice must be achieved within an understanding which itself both determines and is determined by the society in which it takes place.[8]

The idea of a methodology moving from the disciplines of educational study to practical principles and then to particular activities is not only practically unworkable and mistaken in its view of rational action, it also involves a serious confusion of methodology with logic. In his book *Educational Theory and the Preparation of Teachers*[9]

John Wilson criticises my original account of educational theory precisely because of its inadequacy as an outline of a methodology for the development of justifiable theory. As he points out, this means that the picture whereby educational theory draws on all the knowledge within the various forms (of knowledge) that are relevant to educational pursuits, but proceeds from there in grappling with practical problems, 'has, in practice to be considerably modified . . . . [In] any actual instance of serious research one has to adopt a quite different strategy . . . . We have to start with clarifying some objective, consider the practical difficulties of achieving it, and pick up whatever empirical knowledge we find to be relevant on the way.'[10] Wilson goes on to outline his own view of the methodology with its progressive emphases on different kinds of knowledge and disciplines. Though I have many questions about Wilson's alternative, my outline is certainly unacceptable as a methodology. Whether or not the pattern for the justification of an individual action is by appeal to principles and thence to the disciplines, it does not follow from this that in developing educational theory one must follow a method of deriving principles from the disciplines. How the most defensible practical principles are best achieved and how any proposed principles are to be justified are two quite different questions. Questions of methodology are not questions of logic, even if the two are not unrelated. Showing, then, the inadequacy as a methodology for educational theory of what was in fact proposed as an outline of the logic of the theory, does nothing to invalidate that outline. But the question of the validity of the outline of the logic remains and its adequacy as an account of the justification of educational activities needs further examination.

In my comments on Popper's notion of social engineering I indicated that an adequate general account of rational action is necessary if we are to understand the development of defensible educational theory. Without such an account the logic of the theory remains unclear and the character of the methodology that serves that logic must as a consequence remain obscure. Only if we are aware of the nature of rational action in general and the elements that are necessary to it will it be possible to consider adequately the justification of particular actions. What my earlier outline of educational theory failed to do was to take into account certain elements within rational action whose significance for the justification of actions was consequently ignored. Any adequate account of educational theory must, I now consider, reject more firmly than I once saw certain central tenets of rationalism in favour of a more complex theory of rational action.

On the rationalist account, which I now wish to reject explicitly, rational action is seen as necessarily premeditated. Action waits on prior reflection. The justification of any action is therefore a matter of the justification of the prior decision in the light of the beliefs and principles on which it was based. Gilbert Ryle long ago argued against this account in terms of his distinction between 'know how' and 'know that'.[11] Not all forms of intelligent 'know how' presuppose that the person possesses the 'know that' of the relevant principles. In telling examples he pointed out that good cooking came before relevant recipes and that valid deductive arguments were used and known to be valid

before their principles were formulated. Rational action can, and in certain respects must, precede rational principles, the latter being the result of reflection on rational actions. That is not to say that principles, once formulated, are not useful in promoting rational action, or that the range of rational action cannot be extended by modifying the principles of such action in specific ways. What is being denied is that an adequate account of rational action in general can be given simply in terms of principles determined prior to action and justified independently of such action.

A distinction similar to Ryle's has been made by Michael Oakeshott in his analysis of all human activities requiring skill of any sort.[12] By means of this distinction he not only builds up further criticism of rationalism but also begins to develop an alternative account of rational action. All activities, he claims, involve two kinds of knowledge. There is, on the one hand, what he calls technical knowledge, a knowledge of rules, techniques and principles that can be formulated comprehensively in propositions, which can be learned, remembered and put into practice. On the other hand there is practical knowledge, which exists only in use, which is not reflective and cannot be formulated in rules. Its normal expression is in a practice of some sort, in a customary or traditional way of doing things. These two kinds of knowledge Oakeshott considers distinguishable but inseparable, both being involved in every concrete activity. Together they make any skill or act what it is. He explicitly denies, however, that technical knowledge tells us what to do and practical knowledge how to do it. Even in knowing what to do there is involved not only an element of technical knowledge but one of practical knowledge too. The propositions of technical knowledge could not exist without a practical knowledge of how to decide certain questions. Doing anything, therefore, depends on and exhibits knowing how to do it and only part of that knowledge can subsequently be reduced to propositional technical knowledge. What is more, these propositions are not the cause of the activity, nor are they directly regulative of it. Rules and principles cannot be applied to situations by the exercise of knowledge of another kind, practical knowledge. For practical knowledge is not simply some blind unstructured executive competence that applies rules and principles. Practical knowledge consists of organised abilities to discern, judge and perform that are so rooted in understanding, beliefs, values and attitudes that any abstracted propositional statements of those elements or of rules and principles of practice must be inadequate and partial expressions of what is involved. Practical knowledge is acquired by living within the organised social world to which we belong, structured as it is by institutions and traditions of great variety. In education, as in any other area of activity, we come to understand the activity, its problems and their answers from engagement in the activity itself. We have to penetrate the idiom of the activity by practising it. Then, gradually, by a variety of means, we can improve and extend our knowledge of how to pursue it, analysis of the activity and reflection on its rules and principles having their part to play in that process.

On this view, the justification of any individual educational activity cannot be seen simply in terms of an appeal to a set of practical principles. Not merely, as previously

seen, because the very existence of principles presupposes the acceptance of at least some activities as independently justified. But now because practical principles are seen to be necessarily inadequate even for an understanding of any activity let alone for justifying it. Justification must be seen, in Oakeshott's words,[13] as 'faithfulness to the knowledge we have of how to conduct the specific activity we are engaged in', and that is different from 'faithfulness to the principles or rules of the activity'. We may easily be faithful to the latter whilst losing touch with the activity itself. 'Rational conduct is acting in such a way that the coherence of the idiom of the activity . . . is preserved and possibly enhanced.' Rules and principles are only 'abridgments' of the coherence of the activity. And if justification of any activity by approach to principles is inadequate, justification of practical principles by an appeal to academic disciplines is equally called in question. The validity of practical principles must, on this view, stem from their being abstracted from practice, rather than some independent theoretical foundation.

Oakeshott's distinction between technical and practical knowledge draws attention to the nature of practical principles and their relationship to practices and individual activities in a way that makes my earlier outline of the nature of educational theory much too simple. What is not clear, however, is the extent and the way in which he considers the understanding, beliefs, values, attitudes and principles embedded in activities to be incapable of formulation in propositions. Is it that this whole constellation of elements is just too complex ever to be analysed except partially? Is it that it is too subtle and mysterious ever to be amenable to propositional formulations that are anything but distortions? Is it that practical knowledge demands the structuring of capacities in patterns that are in principle capable of conceptualisation but whose incorporation cannot itself be propositionally described? On all these views, rational practices and activities can only be learnt in the exercise of the capacities. But if non-distorting conceptualisation is, at least in principle, possible, even if only partial in its concerns, individual activites can with increasing conceptualisation be subjected to ever more critical analysis and perhaps even to limited forms of justification. And if that conceptualisation can, at least in principle, be comprehensive then justification of a much more rigorous kind is at least possible.

What Michael Polanyi has had to say about the tacit element in all human undertakings is perhaps illuminating here.[14] In any activity of understanding or doing he distinguishes what we are attending to focally, what is before the mind, and that which is tacitly or implicitly known. We attend from the tacit to the focal, the activity demanding an integration of these elements. All activities involve the use of many clues, beliefs and judgments which we do not attend to or apply, which indeed we cannot attend to in performing the activity. They are necessarily held tacitly on this occasion. It is not, however, that these tacit elements cannot in principle be made explicit and on other occasions be entertained focally, though in then considering them explicitly, other elements of a tacit nature will be involved. But when we attend to a tacit element explicitly, we fail to capture its meaning in the integration process in which it functions tacitly. Using

these terms, Oakeshott's practical knowledge can be seen as involving tacit elements of understanding, values and principles which are all, at least in principle, capable of being made explcit and can therefore be made subject to critical evaluation. But the integration of these elements within practical knowledge involves their incorporation into an organisation that is, in Polanyi's view, essentially and necessarily unspecifiable. Nevertheless, though Polanyi holds that in the last analysis all knowledge and practical activity rest on irreducible tacit elements, this does not make knowledge, or action, a merely subjective matter. He maintains firmly that one always acts from the tacit elements to a focal public truth claim, performance or action in all domains, and that each can have its own critique. What such a critique has always to recognise is that there is no ultimate certainty in any domain but a commitment to tacit elements at a lower level. In activities like education, the complexity of the elements is greater than in the case of, say, technology, for education operates at a higher level incorporating lower levels of knowledge and skill as tacit elements. The existence of the tacit in higher levels of understanding and activity is not seen as excluding rational criticism in these domains any more than its existence in science excludes such criticism there. What is needed is rather a recognition of the complexities of critique at higher levels.

What these considerations from Ryle, Oakeshott and Polanyi indicate forcefully is that we must reject totally the idea that rational action is a matter of bringing about a state of affairs whose character is fully predetermined and justifiable. We must accept rather a view of reason as of its nature able to provide only a partial explicit characterisation of action even when that action is premeditated. Formal justification of even premeditated action is therefore at best partial. But we must accept further that our understanding of action is in large measure necessarily derived from an analysis of what is judged to be successful action before we understand, let alone formulate explicitly, the rules or principles that it embodies. Professor Hayek[15] has clearly expressed the general position:

> Man acted before he thought and did not understand before he acted. What we call understanding is in the last resort simply his capacity to respond to his environment with a pattern of actions that helps him persist . . . . 'Learning from experience' . . . is a process not primarily of reasoning but of the observance, spreading, transmission and development of practices which have prevailed because they are successful . . . . The result of this development will in the first instance not be articulated knowledge but a knowledge which, although it can be described in rules, the individual cannot state in words but is merely able to honour in practice. The mind does not so much make rules as consist of rules of action . . . which it has not made.[16]

But this is not just a phenomenon in the early evolution of understanding. It is a

persistent element in all understanding.

> Mind is an adaptation to the natural and social surroundings in which man lives and it has developed in constant interaction with the institutions which determine the structure of society. Mind is as much the product of the social environment in which it has grown up and which it has not made as something that has in turn acted upon and altered these institutions.[17]

Hayek's contention is that in any advanced society like our own there exist both elements of order that have a spontaneous origin and elements whose rules are deliberately made. Whatever their origin, the operation of the rules of order may be 'spontaneous' rather than deliberate.[18] We can endeavour to improve on a system of order by articulating and revising the general rules on which it rests but this can only be done at a general level and improvement cannot be obtained if individuals are deprived of the use of their own understanding of particular circumstances both explicit and tacit.[19] However, attempts at individual piecemeal changes within an existing system will only result in uncontrolled disturbances that can lead to many unforeseeable and undesirable consequences unless they are guided by adherence to certain general principles for the evolution of the system in ways judged desirable as a whole.[20]

In keeping with this view, if we are to develop rational educational practice, it now seems to me that we must start from a consideration of current practice, the rules and principles it actually embodies and the knowledge, beliefs and principles that the practitioners employ in both characterising that practice and deciding what ought to be done. The practical discourse in which what is going on can be expressed will have much in common with the discourse of everyday practical activities. It will include particular technical terms, beliefs and principles concerned with specifically educational practices and institutions, but these will be embedded within a much wider general body of discourse. Getting at current practice and policy will necessarily involve articulating accurately the concepts and categories that practitioners use implicitly and explicitly, for it is only from descriptions and principles formulated in these terms that an overt rational critique of practice is possible. Any analysis of educational practice achieved in this way constitutes what I shall call the 'operational educational theory' of those concerned. Such an analysis can of course be undertaken to cover a limited or wide range of educational activities. It can relate these in varying degrees to other, non-educational activities, beliefs and principles. It can be concerned with the practice of, say, an individual, a school or an LEA. Of course, any such explicit analysis is only a partial expression of what occurs. But it sets out elements of practice, belief and principle that are to a greater or lesser degree susceptible to overt rational criticism.

In examining the particular actions or activities of an individual practitioner, critical examination can be made in terms of the understanding of the situation employed, the principles used in deciding what to do, the anticipated consequences of different possibilities, the actual consequences and so on. This may be questioning of the individual's action and judgment in the light of all that he can be seen to bring to the situation, both explicit and implicit, or it may be a challenge to the person's operational educational theory in terms of its coherence or the justification of its elements. The first form of questioning is very much an assessment of performance, of the exercise of know how, and an attempt to make explicit the operational rationale of what was done in the particular case in terms of the practitioner's own general operational theory. How far this critique will be possible will vary in particular cases because of their possible uniqueness in crucial respects. It will also vary according to the personal characteristics of the individual concerned. It must, too, be remembered that the burden of much that has been considered earlier implies that the inability of the practitioner or an outsider to provide a satisfactory explicit rationale for an action or activity is of itself no measure of its success. Nevertheless, it is equally true that judgment and action can be trained to be more adequate in relation to a person's existing knowledge, beliefs, principles and capacities through consideration of the operational rationale of particular incidents.

Consideration of particular actions or activities and their rationale may, however, raise critical consideration of the understanding and principles with which the practitioner in general approaches these situations. The question then is no longer whether particular judgments or actions were the best that could be taken by this practitioner in the circumstances in which the situation arose, but whether the understanding, principles and capacities that he could bring were themselves justifiable. It is with the critique of 'operational educational theory' in this sense that educational theory in its wider sense is concerned. Educational theory is thus directed at more rational educational practice by the continuous attempt to develop operational educational theory composed of elements that are as far as possible rationally defensible. But if this pursuit is not to be misunderstood, the complex character of operational educational theory and its partial characterisation of practice must be kept firmly in mind. In general the concepts employed in operational theory will be those used by practitioners as a result of their formal and informal education, training and socialisation. Many of these concepts will be those of everyday life, developed to capture complex situations and activities as existential wholes, whilst taking for granted a common recognition of their detailed characters and their context. The concepts of specifically educational situations and activities will be of exactly the same character. Much of the understanding within this level of theory will have been developed in the context of immediate practical experience and will be co-terminous with everyday understanding. In particular, many of its operational principles, both explicit and implicit, will be of their nature generalisations from practical experience and have as their justification the results of individual activities and practices. In many characterisations of educational theory, my own included, principles justified in this

way have until recently been regarded as at best pragmatic maxims having a first crude and superficial justification in practice that in any rationally developed theory would be replaced by principles with more fundamental, theoretical, justification. That now seems to me a mistake. Rationally defensible practical principles, I suggest, must of their nature stand up to such practical tests and without that are necessarily inadequate. This demand stems from the fact that only principles generated in relation to practical experience and that are operationally tested can begin to do justice to the necessarily complex tacit elements within practice. Indeed, I would now argue that the essence of any practical theory is its concern to develop principles formulated in operationally effective practical discourse that are subjected to practical test.

But if the practical testing of principles of this character is central to all practical theories, including educational theory, we must recognise that neither the formulation nor the testing involved is a self-contained enterprise. The activities and practices of everyday life are developed and modified in a wide context of knowledge, beliefs and values about men and their physical and social context. The very concepts in which our implicit and explicit understanding of practice occurs are tied in with concepts of knowledge and understanding of many kinds. Men have developed knowledge and understanding not only in relation to immediate practice, but in the pursuit of scientific, historical, religious and other forms of explanation. These employ their own conceptual schemes in pursuit of their own forms of rationally defensible claims. The concepts and principles of everyday practice and its discourse become modified progressively in the light of scientific advances, changes in our psychological and sociological understanding, and so on. If practical principles are to be rationally defensible they must therefore be seen to be formulated and tested in ways that incorporate wider beliefs and values that are rationally defensible rather than erroneous. In relation to practical affairs, therefore, it is the job of such disciplines as psychology, sociology and philosophy to provide a context of ever more rationally defensible beliefs and values for the development and practical testing of practical principles.

But if practical discourse is itself limited in its capacity to articulate the principles of practice, the discourses of these other disciplines, which have been developed for other purposes, will of themselves be unable to provide any directly helpful forms of conceptualisation for the promotion of rational practice. Their proper significance is, by virtue of their nature, going to be indirect. Any attempt to derive defensible practical principles from the findings of, say, research psychology, must founder on the gross inadequacy of such findings in relation to the complexities, both implicit and explicit, that characterise practical activities. Any attempt to implement such ill-conceived principles can only serve to distort practice into indefensible activities.

Looked at in these terms, the role of such separate disciplines as, say, sociology of education and philosophy of education within the domain of educational theory as a whole must be the appropriate form of criticism of the sociological and philosophical elements that are significant for the formulation and practical testing of practical principles.

It is their job to aid these processes in every way possible. It is not their job to be individually or collectively the basis for the direct formulation of practical principles. In so far as they may suggest forms of practice, these will require reformulation in the light of past practical experience of appropriate kinds if they are to have any serious hope of rational defence through practical testing.

The logic of educational theory I therefore now see as demanding the justification of what is done in any particular case by reference to knowledge, understanding and practical principles, which principles have been subject to the test of practical experience. The knowledge, understanding, practical principles and forms of practical test which are thus appealed to incorporate and make use of elements that are open to rational criticism in various contributory disciplines. The justification of these elements in the disciplines is in principle necessary but not sufficient for the justification of the practical principles. It is therefore as mistaken to think of the practical principles of educational theory being justified by appeal to the disciplines as it is to think that a theory in physics is justified by appeal to the validity of the mathematical system it employs.

The best methodology for the development of rational educational practice is, I think, in large measure an empirical matter. Though the aim must be in part to develop practical principles justified as far as possible in terms that conform to this logic, the justification of these principles can never be more than a matter of degree. In so far, however, as educational theory has in the past concentrated on the development of the contributory or foundational disciplines within their own terms, it has failed to concentrate on the promotion of more rational operational practical principles and their testing in experience. In recent years there has been much more attention given to practical principles and a concern to get at those operationally effective in current practice. There has as yet been little examination of such principles and their attendant beliefs and values by means of the relevant contributory disciplines. There are, however, signs that this work is now developing.

The testing in experience of such principles is likewise in an embryonic stage. It is a complex process in which major disagreements in values and the undeveloped state of relevant work in the contributory disciplines creates many problems. Nevertheless in a modest and as yet relatively unsophisticated way, numerous curriculum evaluation and development projects have made a beginning. But at present it seems to me not possible to advocate any particular methodology, for the development of educational theory.

Though it is perhaps true to say that in curriculum work in particular educational theory has begun to recognise something of the logic I am here defending, that recognition has been largely intuitive. Those writing on curriculum theory have had little to contribute to any general elucidation of these issues. In writings on educational theory as such there have been a number of relevant moves. As early as 1969 Harold Entwistle,[21] in a paper analysing the place of theory in the learning of professional skills, made some significant comments on the place of theory in professional practice as such. In a discussion of Ryle's account of intelligent activity and to some extent Polanyi's work, he stresses the

limitations of all theoretical considerations for practice because of the unspecifiable, tacit components at the heart of all practice and the fact that, logically, practice is prior to theory. Nevertheless he sees the importance of theory in providing a great deal of contextual understanding necessary to intelligent practice. He recognises too the place of practical maxims derived from reflection on practice and refers to the systematisation of maxims into theory that can result from a great deal of reasoning and practice. Both contextual understanding and principles of practice, some of these acquired by the individual prior to performance, he sees as significant for both successful and justifiable practice. But perhaps because he is concerned with success rather than justification, the crucial logical status of practical principles and the relationship of contributory disciplines to these are never directly considered.

In a collection of papers on *Theory and the Practice of Education,* edited by Anthony Hartnett and Michael Naish,[22] in so far as the editors themselves come clean about the nature of educational theory, they seem willing to subscribe to the notion that ideally it would seek to establish rational practical principles. But they are so concerned about disagreements within the disciplines that would supply much of the knowledge on which principles could be based and seemingly irreconcilable disagreements in the values experienced practitioners hold that they conclude:

> practical educational generalizations of whatever kind are likely to be at best tentative and unreliable . . . . What educational theory is likely to be able to offer those engaged in educational practice is not firm guidance but only suggestions and hints about what might be best done and when and how. There is little, if any, possibility of offering practical generalisations which if followed will solve practitioners' practical problems and ensure successful practice. Where theory is available it will have to be applied and this will inescapably require initiative from the practitioners.[23]

I find this conclusion disappointing in part because earlier in this collection the editors included an extract from the writings of Dorothy Emmet[24] that begins to outline conditions for the promotion of rational judgments. The editors themselves have, with many appropriate qualifications, also developed these conditions a little further.[25] Their pessimism may also stem from a search for principles that will both guarantee success in practice and promote the most justifiable practice. These are not the same thing. But above all they seem not to accept the vast potential of the domain of the everyday discourse of experienced and critical teachers for the generation and justification of practical principles. What is needed to combat their pessimism, if the importance of practical principles is accepted, is to elucidate much further the nature of practical discourse and the justification in it of maxims and principles, to pursue

much more systematically the justification of principles in relation to practice, and to direct the disciplines much more rigorously to aiding this task.

In his paper 'Theory and Practice'[26] D.I. Lloyd extols the importance for practice of what he calls 'common sense' and the activity of 'reflection'. He refers with approval to the fund of knowledge and understanding of people and situations that common sense contains when that term is understood 'as a counterpart to theory'. It contains too 'the advice of the experienced, the wisdom of the old, the perceptive remarks and insight we associate with particular individuals whose judgment we respect.' With that as a background he stresses the value of reflection in particular cases, standing back from what one is doing without losing the details of the situation and in these terms looking at reasons why one action may be preferable to another, employing elements of the disciplines in the process. But he calls in question the importance of theory operating at a general level. What can be said in general he sees as having limited scope, individual cases of the same activity having overlapping elements in common as different 'games' might have, rather than specifiable elements common to them all. With much of this I have, of course, the greatest sympathy. But I find it inadequate in two respects. First, the informality of the process of 'reflection' as Lloyd comments on it fails to communicate the elements of stringent critical appraisal there can be not only of individual judgments but of the understanding, values and practical principles directly employed by practitioners as well as of the many wider presupposed beliefs and values. Lloyd, like Hartnett and Naish, seems to me not to do justice at all to what could even now be achieved if we were more systematic in our efforts. This is linked with my second difficulty: Lloyd's use of the Wittgensteinian analogy of the definition of games for the power of generalisations about educational activities. Though faithfulness to individual situations is a necessary part of every justifiable educational judgment, the analogy used I regard as doing scant justice to the explicit development of many educational practices to cover widely agreed and deliberately institutionalised common enterprises, e.g. those of helping children to learn to read or to understand their physical environment. Whatever the character of practical principles, it seems to me they are of a much tougher generality than Lloyd suggests. I see no reason to be shy or coy about common sense and reflection as offering the key to our understanding of the characteristics of practical theories. After all, the central elements of all other theoretical developments, be they in the sciences, theology or philosophy, can be discerned in common sense concerns, out of which they have historically emerged. What we have to do is to try to articulate more adequately the nature of practical judgments and principles and how they in their turn can be rationally pursued.

I therefore find myself very much more in agreement with the outline of 'actual educational theories' in a paper 'Education as a Socio-Practical Field'[27] by Suzanne de Castell and Helen Freeman. They comment on Lloyd's distinction between reflection and theory (as understood in educational psychology and other disciplines) as being more appropriately seen as a distinction between practitioners' theorising and academic

theorising, arguing that in any adequate notion of theory for what they call 'the socio-practical field' of education, the two would be merged. It is to them characteristic of an area of practice like education that the problems practitioners must face are particular, and what counts as a problem and its solution is defined by the people in the context. The practitioner's concern is with the solution of a practical problem which provides the reason for what is to be done. They see the tacit elements of practice and the contingencies, especially the social circumstances, which constrain action as necessary features which any appropriate theory for practice must accept. Such theory, they conclude, must be developed by practising theoreticians. They suggest that any theory will have to take certain basic concepts as given for its purpose (though these concepts could in their turn be questioned in another theory) and that it will contain empirical data and theoretical explanation from the disciplines together with what, in Lloyd's sense, can be referred to as common sense. What is more, such theories will seek to be as unified and coherent as possible. The relationship between theory and practice they see as dialectical, the approach to individual problems being essentially pragmatic.

My major difficulty with this account is that it still seems to me to give inadequate weight to the need to seek the establishment of general principles in what I have labelled practical discourse. The authors stress admirably the need for philosophers of education, educational psychologists and others to be practitioners themselves so that their contributions to educational theory will be developed in relation to the concrete practices and the concepts and beliefs that practitioners employ. Yet the activity of such specialists, for all its practical anchorage, will remain distorting if their contribution is directly allowed to modify practical principles rather than being used in the development of new principles in the dialectical relationship between principles and practice. Practical theory constitutes a domain generated in relationship to practice, using the achievements of the disciplines. In adequately developed theory the effect of the disciplines in practice is to be discerned through the filter of practical principles. It is the justification of individual judgments in relation to general principles and the justification of those principles in relation to individual judgments that is the key to our understanding the logic of educational theory.

Since my article in 1966 for the volume edited by Professor Tibble, the characterisation of the nature of educational principles and their justification has emerged as far more problematical than I then recognised. The significance of the tacit elements in all action can now be seen to be fundamental to any adequate account of practice and its principles. Likewise, the fact that we are ourselves products of the social situations we have created and that our understanding of these situations is central to their being what they are means that the practitioner's view of what is occurring must be recognised as central. These features can to some extent be discerned progressively in writing on educational theory, in certain exploratory approaches within educational research and in new emphases within the teaching of educational studies. There has come to be a focus on the actual practices of education and the discourse practitioners use. It is not so much that what I wrote in 1966 was mistaken as that what I omitted led to a distorting emphasis.

Educational theory I still see as concerned with determining rationally defensible principles for educational practice. The adequate formulation and defence of these principles I now see as resting not simply on appeal to the disciplines, but on a complex pragmatic process that uses its own appropriate practical discourse. How best we might give an account of the logic of such discourse and its principles remains I think uncertain, though I have indicated how I think we should approach the matter.

Perhaps the most promising discussions of this now focal question are to be found quite outside the particular context of educational theory, in the contemporary study of critical theory, particularly the work of Habermas and his critics. Habermas has sought to outline the fundamental framework within which rational practical discourse can take place by articulating the basic presuppositions of speech acts. This sets out certain normative conditions for rational decisions and consensus. His approach in formulating these principles that underlie all practical activities can also be used in the context of more particular areas. As one of his most able expositors and critics, Thomas McCarthy, has expressed it:

As Habermas sees it, the basic idea behind this approach is that speaking and acting subjects know how to achieve, accomplish, perform, produce a variety of things without explicitly adverting to, or being able to give an explicit account of, the structures, rules, criteria, schemata on which their performances are based. The aim of rational reconstruction is precisely to render explicit the structures and rules underlying much 'practically mastered, pre-theoretical know-how', the tacit knowledge that represents the subject's competence in a given domain . . . if the tacit, pre-theoretical knowledge that is to be reconstructed represents a universal know-how . . . our task is the reconstruction of a 'species competence'. Adopting this approach, Habermas advances a proposal for a universal or formal pragmatics.[28]

In another passage he writes:

Communication that is oriented towards reaching understanding inevitably involves reciprocal raising and recognition of validity claims. Claims to truth and rightness, if radically challenged, can be redeemed only through argumentative discourse leading to rationally motivated consensus. Universal-pragmatic analysis of the conditions of discourse and rational consensus show these to rest on the supposition of an 'ideal speech situation' characterised by an effective equality of chances to assume dialogue roles.[29]

There is much dispute about many features of Habermas's programme. Whether or not his particular exposition of the ethics of speech acts is correct, and this is far from

obvious, it is by no means clear that such an ethic is in any ultimate sense the necessary foundation of rational practice. And just what the implementation of such an ethic means logically and methodologically in the rational critique of more specific practices like those of education, it is not easy to envisage. However, it certainly suggests self-critical, reflective and reconstructive analysis and judgment by different groups of practitioners, operating at different and progressively more deep and wide-ranging levels of presupposition, using the disciplines to maximum degree. That kind of activity, whatever particular form it may come to take, can hardly fail to contribute illuminatingly to rational educational practice. And if practice does indeed precede theory in this area as in others, perhaps this will in due course bring us further understanding of educational theory. Certainly, at present it seems to me to afford us the most hope.

Notes

1. P.H. Hirst, 'Educational Theory', in J.W. Tibble (ed.), *The Study of Education,* London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966.
2. D.J. O'Connor, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education,* London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1957.
3. *Ibid.,* p. 75.
4. *Ibid.,* p. 76.
5. *Ibid.,* p. 110.
6. G. Langford and D.J. O'Connor (eds), *New Essays in the Philosophy of Education,* London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973, Papers 3 and 4.
7. K. Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies,* London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1945. Especially Vol. 1, Ch. 9.
8. For a further criticism of Popper's position, see A. O'Hear, *Karl Popper,* London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980, Ch. 8.
9. J. Wilson, *Educational Theories and the Preparation of Teachers,* Slough, NFER, 1975.
10. *Ibid.,* p. 62.
11. G. Ryle, *The Concept of Mind,* London, Hutchinson, 1949.
12. M. Oakeshott, *Rationalism in Politics,* London, Methuen, 1962. See the papers 'Rationalism in Politics' and 'Rational Conduct'.
13. *Ibid.,* pp. 101–2.
14. See particularly, M. Polanyi and H. Prosch, *Meaning,* University of Chicago Press, 1975.
15. F.A. Hayek, *Law, Legislation and Liberty,* Vol. 1, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973.
16. *Ibid.,* p. 18.
17. *Ibid.,* p. 17.
18. *Ibid.,* pp. 45–6.

19. See *ibid.,* p. 61.

20. See *ibid.,* p. 60.

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PHILOSOPHY AND THE STUDY OF EDUCATION: A CRITIQUE OF THE COMMON SENSE CONSENSUS

Jim Walker

Recent discussion concerning the contribution of philosophy to the study of education, by Wilson and Cowell (1983), Musgrave (1983) and Crittenden (1983), is based on acceptance of the view of Education (the study) as an interdisciplinary endeavour in which, as Wilson and Cowell put it, 'various disciplines are brought to bear upon practical problems'. This view, as argued by Hirst (1966) for instance, has been called the 'current paradigm' by Musgrave, who traces its emergence to 'the last major paradigm shift which occurred in the early 1960s'. Whether in its Hirstian or other versions, the view of education as interdisciplinary now probably reflects the prevailing intuitions of most educationists and is widely institutionalized in the academic structures and practices of education. I shall call it the *common sense consensus* (CSC) concerning education. I shall argue that it has serious theoretical problems, and suggest an alternative approach.

For Wilson and Cowell, the main problem with the CSC is that it is not working well in practice. This derives from a fundamental question: how to bring together the diverse elements of education in a way which is academically rigorous and respectable, provides solid knowledge about education and helps address practical problems. Their claim is that we do not yet have a methodology to achieve this. The CSC, therefore, indicates an aim or ideal rather than present reality. Musgrave agrees, but does not find Wilson's and Cowell's answer very satisfactory:

> This raises the main problem that those using the new paradigm have not yet solved and it is a problem that many teaching education just ignore. No one has really shown us how to bring together the various subjects which can be applied to educational problems.
>
> (Musgrave, 1983, p. 232)

Crittenden is less pessimistic:

> Education as a field of study cannot have the unity of a discipline in its own right, but it need not be a loose aggregation of separate, applied disciplines. A substantial level of coherence can be achieved through the sharing of fundamental aims and key concepts, and the recognition of common significant problems.
>
> <div align="right">(Crittenden, 1983, p. 226)</div>

The position I shall argue for is very close to Crittenden's in spirit, although it rejects the notion of disciplinary unity he seems to assume, and, along with that, the CSC and his agreement with Wilson and Cowell on the central importance of the philosopher's role 'in defining the common basic concepts and building the diverse aspects of inquiry into a coherent normative theory'.

Musgrave and Crittenden are both sceptical about Wilson's and Cowell's claim that educational institutions' 'first priority should be to acquire, by hook or by crook, at least one competent philosopher and one competent psychologist to start things off' (if possible as part of a team) to create 'self-monitoring within the institution' and 'begin the task of approaching serious research' (1983, pp. 218–20).

There are at least three issues to be distinguished here:

1. Whether education lacks a unifying, epistemically and practically productive methodology. I agree with Wilson and Cowell (as, I think, do Crittenden and Musgrave) that it does, and wish to make some positive suggestions on this score.
2. Whether the way to achieve this methodology is by creating interdisciplinary teams.
3. Whether within such teamwork some disciplines, for instance philosophy and psychology, should have priority in some sense over others.

I believe the positive answer given by both Wilson and Cowell and their commentators to 2 is questionable, and that 3 should be answered with a firm negative. A positive answer to 2, insofar as it is based on acceptance of the CSC, is likely to further entrench the CSC at the meta-theoretical level as well as in the construction of brainstorming teams; and if the CSC is incorrect or misleading, and is therefore part of the problem we are seeking to solve (achieving a practically relevant, rigorous and unified education), then acting upon a positive answer could be self-defeating.

The common sense consensus: education as an interdisciplinary study

Hirst distinguishes between education considered as a 'field' of study where logically

distinct disciplines – Hirst's term is 'forms of knowledge' – focus on topics of interest in the institutions and practices of education, and studies in education which produce 'practical theory' in which contributions from the relevant disciplines are brought together to focus on solutions to practical problems by way of formulating and justifying practical principles to be applied in education. Epistemologically, then, there are three levels: the forms of knowledge, or disciplines (e.g. philosophy, physical science); interdisciplinary descriptive– explanatory studies, or fields (for example, geography, women's studies); and normative, action-guiding theories (medicine, engineering, educational theory). However, as practical theories produce general principles for the guidance of practice, this is not the end of the story. There remains, Hirst remarks, the process of application of the principles, or formation of 'practical judgements' (Hirst, 1966, p. 57) – a process to be conducted by the practitioners rather than researchers or theorists, however much dependent it might be on the work of the latter.

Although Hirst has probably produced the most explicit underpinning epistemology, it is a fair assumption that many educationists subscribing to the CSC, while associating the idea with the work of Hirst or others, operate with only a vague notion of 'discipline' or 'form of knowledge' (and, as Musgrave says, ignoring problems of interdisciplinary integration); and that the intuitive appeal of the CSC reflects the actual *specialization and fragmentation* of education and the consciousness of most educationists as specialists within a particular subdivision of education, rather than the felt need for an explicit epistemology, for some overall and coherent account of education as part of the total epistemic arena. It is often more conducive to a career in education to be a specialist rather than a generalist, and an epistemology of education that provides a rationale for such specialization will be attractive for that reason rather than for its own intrinsic interest and can safely be left to the specialist philosophers for its detailed articulation. It will also be plausible if, as a matter of historically contingent fact, education is thus subdivided, and practitioners of one specialization have their adherence to the CSC reinforced by similar views held by practitioners of other specializations. The consciousness of specialization and disciplinary boundaries is further entrenched by the origins in and continuing dependence of the educational subdivisions on 'parent' disciplines such as philosophy, psychology and sociology – a point which Hirst's epistemology of educational theory highlights with its distinctions between forms, fields and practical theories.

This said, there is of course another side to the story, which brings us back to the focus of the present debate. For the disciplines or forms constituting the interdisciplinary study, Education, are supposed to be brought together somehow, at least in a 'field' and ideally in a 'practical theory'. But how this is to be done, and in particular within whose particular disciplinary competence it falls, is a major issue of dispute: Wilson and Cowell on one side advocating pride of place for philosophy and an important role for psychology and Musgrave strongly questioning such a hierarchy, with Crittenden apparently somewhere in between.

Now the question of *how* to bring together, say, three epistemically distinct contributions, the forms f_1, f_2 and f_3 (e.g. philosophy, history and sociology) – the methodological question – cannot be answered independently of an answer to the question of what distinguishes f_1, f_2 and f_3 from each other. The way in which we mix eggs, milk and flour to bake a cake is rather different from the way in which we combine steel, air and rubber to make the wheel of a car. The physics and chemistry differ from one case to the next. Each of these integrative procedures, however, when successful, solves a practical problem arising from our needs for food or transport. Moreover, eggs, milk and flour are elements of the set of culinary ingredients (and of course of numerous other sets too); and our understanding of how and why to use them is part of our wider understanding of food preparation and its ingredients. Likewise for automotive engineering.

Although I do not really mean to pose the present issue as whether education is more like a cake than a car, it is worth noting that metaphorical expressions such as 'mixing', 'synthesizing', 'structuring', 'recipe' and 'blueprint' are not unknown in this context. Hirst, for instance, eschews the idea of educational theory as a 'synthesis', hinting that it may be meaningless, and seems to be closer to cars than cakes in his use of 'structure'. This is a result of his strong insistence on the logical distinctness of the fundamental forms of knowledge: at the very least they have distinct criteria for truth and validity (Hirst, 1974, this volume, p. 258–9) and there are no criteria for truth and validity *outside* the forms: fields and practical theories do not have them (Hirst, 1966, p. 49). It is therefore hard to imagine their being blended into some further, epistemically autonomous stage governed by a set of rules and procedures qualitatively distinct from their own. They retain their identity and discernibility when brought together in educational theory – like the rubber, air and steel of a wheel, rather than emerging as something superseding their previous forms, such as a cake into which eggs, milk and flour have been transformed – they will never look the same again.

Metaphors aside, the critical issue concerns the boundaries between f_1, f_2, f_3 and any other member of the set of forms of knowledge (f_1, f_2, f_3, . . . f_n): that is, the nature of the distinction between forms. This issue has been canvassed at some length elsewhere (Evers and Walker, 1982, 1983) and I believe it has been shown that there is no coherent way of partitioning the set of forms such that each form is epistemically autonomous or in any way identifiable as a form in Hirst's sense. If this is so, then two quite important consequences follow.

First, if there are any distinctions at all to be drawn between disciplines or forms, they will not be logically necessary distinctions but only historically contingent; and, second, this will mean that the business of bringing together forms in fields or practical theories will be an entirely empirical task, a project of pragmatic social practice.

There are further implications for our assessment of the procedure recommended by Wilson and Cowell. For these writers, there is a clear (and logical) distinction between conceptual or logical questions – the domain of philosophers – and empirical questions – the domain of social scientists and historians – though all of us, academic specialists or not,

possess a reasonable and reasonably reliable approach to tackling both kinds of question through our common sense. For Wilson and Cowell, then, there are at least two logically distinct disciplines, philosophy and empirical science, and the development of the requisite methodology to alleviate education's ills hinges on the performance of the distinctively philosophical task of conceptual clarification and explication. Thus for Wilson and Cowell, as for Hirst and numerous other philosophers of education, the belief in logically distinct disciplines goes along with the view of philosophy as essentially, or primarily, conceptual analysis. The principal contemporary underpinning of the CSC has been a product of analytic philosophy of education (APE) (Walker, 1984c) within which Walker has been a leading figure. Crittenden and Musgrave also accept conceptual analysis as at least an important part of philosophy. Hirst's presentation of his forms of knowledge thesis, and his application of it to educational theory, has its appeal precisely because it explicates a widely held common sense view or conceptualization of the nature of knowledge and of educational theory: its common sense obviousness can serve to create an impression of logical necessity. But unless we adopt some strong doctrine of the authority of common sense (Walker, 1984a) the fact that a notion is accepted as common sense is scarcely conclusive evidence for its soundness.

Moreover, because philosophy is thought to be logically distinct from other disciplines in education, and because the business of drawing the distinctions between disciplines and articulating the relations into which they will come when they generate education is a task for philosophy, philosophy will, in both epistemic theory (epistemology) and epistemic practice (development of educational methodology) be in a position of *epistemic privilege* in the field. This will be the case even more in educational theory – the practical theory. These are the unstated assumptions and arguments behind Wilson's and Cowell's practical proposition that philosophers should be placed in a position of epistemic leadership, a proposition which a rejection of the forms of knowledge doctrine should lead us to criticize, and on this score to side with Musgrave. Unlike Musgrave, however, I think that rejecting this proposition involves rejecting the CSC as our basic guide to education, and especially the production of educational theory. It also involves the rejection of APE.

Philosophy and the study of education

According to APE, the chief role of the philosopher is to 'clarify' or 'explicate' our concepts and conceptual schemes. Other roles, such as evaluating the cogency of arguments and analyzing the grounds for our claims to knowledge of our moral, political and aesthetic judgements, are usually, in APE, thought to be closely associated with or even logically dependent upon performance of the first, analytic, role. Wilson and Cowell, for instance, set out to analyze the grounds for establishing claims to knowledge about education, and after asserting that education is a field in which we do not really have anything deserving the title 'certain knowledge', they outline several points,

'mostly of logic or commonsense, which any serious person concerned with the study of education needs to bear in mind' (1983, p. 211). The central 'logical' points hinge on conceptual analysis, notably of 'education' and 'being serious', and play a central part in Wilson's and Cowell's argument; and, especially in this respect, their argument is a typical specimen of APE. The role of these two concepts is the fundamental *normative* one of *delimiting the field of reasonable and relevant discussion and determining the kinds of acceptable solution to the problems of the delimited field.*

When there is a dispute over the nature of education (the practice) APE assumes that conceptual analysis of 'education' (the word, term or concept) might assist in the resolution of the dispute by eliminating conceptual error. But, verbal inconsistency aside, what is to count as a conceptual error? We need some authoritative analysis of 'education' so that we can be sure what the substantive dispute, if there really is one, is all about. In exactly this fashion, Wilson and Cowell assert that

> some distinction must surely be drawn between (a) concern about, say, the cost or economics of educational institutions, the history of various Acts of Parliament, or the secondary school as an instrument of social mobility, and (b) some more direct concern with learning, teaching and the development of the various forms of knowledge and understanding. Under philosophical pressure most . . . would grant at least a certain centrality or primacy to (b): that is, would grant that education is basically to do with learning things.
>
> (p. 215)

But this is straightforward question-begging in the form of rhetorical appeal, pitched at a readership already within a certain conceptual frame of reference, a readership which either already thinks of itself as 'serious students of education' (p. 211) or which would not want to fall outside the group to whom the term 'being serious' is correctly applied. Thus either the analysis of 'education' offered is normative because 'serious' people already subscribe to it, at least implicitly, in their thinking about education; or it is normative for people who aspire to 'seriousness' but whose thinking has yet to be structured in the 'reasonable' and 'logical' pattern outlined by Wilson and Cowell.

In this way conceptual analysis which is apparently descriptive is implicitly normative, though when pressed with the question '*Whose* concepts are you analyzing?', APE theorists have to respond '*Ours,* of course' (Hirst and Peters, 1970, this volume, p. 33). The inherently conservative character of this procedure has been noted several times (Walker, 1984a); but more important is the general methodological problem involved, namely the impossibility of finding a non-circular criterion within conceptual analysis for distinguishing a correct from an incorrect or an adequate from an inadequate analysis, a difficulty which, as Edel has observed, reflects 'a soft spot in analytic theory generally' (1972, this volume, p. 40;

cf. also Evers, 1979). The upshot is that conceptual schemes have to be *justified,* and this means going outside (or, better, bypassing) mere analysis and into theory-construction, in which APE is but one theory among competing alternatives. One source of competing alternatives largely ignored by APE is the Anglo-American mainstream tradition in epistemology and philosophy of science, which teems with implications for the way philosophy of education might be done, and therefore for the pursuit of educational theory.

Let me single out two sets of implications. First, mainly due to the work of Quine, there are serious doubts about the viability of any kind of philosophy based on conceptual or meaning analysis. Quine has argued that the principal plank on which conceptual analysis stands, the distinction between conceptual points and empirical points (more technically the distinction between analytic and synthetic statements) is illusory: the distinction cannot be coherently drawn (Quine, 1953; Evers, 1979; Evers and Walker, 1984). If Quine is right, not only is APE discredited as an acceptable form of philosophy but the very distinction between philosophy and other disciplines, or forms of knowledge, in terms of which the present debate about education is conducted, becomes a matter of pragmatic convenience – or inconvenience – rather than epistemic necessity, a point I have already urged in another context above. For Quine, philosophy is continuous with science, or, more accurately, a part of science and uses the same general procedures as the rest of science: theorizing, hypothesizing, testing against evidence, etc.; and here the second set of implications becomes relevant. For Quine, as for growing numbers of philosophers, 'evidence' is not clearly and qualitatively distinguished from 'theory': evidence is theory-laden. Thus although Quine is prepared to give a *prima facie* status to *empirical evidence* he, along with many other philosophers, is prepared to acknowledge that theoretical commitments can be used, and frequently are used by scientists, as *theoretical evidence* against empirical findings. Quine therefore solves the problem of the theory/evidence relation by proposing a *coherence theory of evidence* (as distinct from a coherence theory of truth). These matters relate to the constant practices of science and common sense and are frequently raised and discussed by scientists and the person in the street, albeit not always in the terminology used by philosophers. Certain people, who have been historically among those labelled as 'philosophers', have tended to specialize in them. But to infer from this that there is a logically distinct discipline of philosophy is to confuse a contingent and hopefully convenient but sometimes obstructive *division of labour* with certain putatively 'necessary' properties of knowledge. As Quine puts it:

> Boundaries between disciplines are useful for deans and librarians, but let us not overestimate them – the boundaries. When we abstract from them we see all of science . . . as a single sprawling system, loosely connected in some portions, but disconnected nowhere.
>
> (1966, p. 56)

The coherence theory of evidence, for its application, needs a model of the growth of knowledge, of how competing theories might be compared and their relative merits evaluated. These issues have been closely addressed in contemporary philosophy of science, notably in models of theory-competition, in which the growth of knowledge is theorized as the development of rival theories or, more broadly, research programs (Lakatos, 1970). A theory, viewed developmentally, is in fact a theory-series, in which each successive member of the series represents an attempt to solve a problem faced by the theory in the preceding stage. Theory development is thus a problem-solving activity.

If there is more than one theory available concerning a particular issue or problem, as is often the case in education, our problem becomes that of choosing between the alternatives. Since we have agreed that there is no theory-free evidence available, our coherence theory of evidence suggests that the relevance of evidence to the theory-competition be decided by reference to the logical consistency between the theories implicit in, for example, the empirical evidence, and the statements making up the competing theories. If, for instance, the theory of electron microscopy implicit in a body of empirical evidence is consistent with two competing theories, A and B, in biophysics, then this evidence may be regarded as relevant to the choice between A and B. To adopt a useful term suggested by Lakatos, accommodating the theory-ladenness of all evidence, such 'evidence' may be described as 'touchstone theory' and, in the context of the competition between A and B, as a third body of theory, T. If T is consistent with A but inconsistent with B, then B faces a new problem: how to deal with the anomalies presented in the relations between B and T. If B is unable to resolve the incoherence, this does not mean that it is falsified, but it will incline us, at least on this score, to favour A. The search for the application of touchstone to problems of theoretical choice becomes a crucial part of scientific (including philosophical) method, in which the drive for 'systematic virtue' (Evers and Walker, 1984) is fundamental. In this epistemology, all theories are open to revision: there is no 'certain knowledge' in Wilson's and Cowell's sense, whether in education, the natural sciences or anywhere else.

In this process the analysis of meanings, or the explication of concepts, is irrelevant or misleading. The terms in our theories have whatever meaning they have only in the context of those theories, and the decision as to the meaning (or, better, the extension or reference) a term should have is the same decision as that of which theory to adopt. Semantics and epistemology are interdependent. Setting aside cases of straight linguistic confusion, or arbitrary differences in linguistic convention in which no issue of substance is at stake, if people differ in their usage of terms such as 'education' or 'being serious' this is because they hold, at whatever level of conscious awareness or explicit articulation, different theories concerning human social behaviour and practice. Focusing our analysis on words and their meanings, or concepts and their criteria, will tend to obscure this and will certainly not assist in resolution of the substantive issues on which practical problems hinge.

On this view of the nature of knowledge and the role of philosophy, education and especially educational theory become an area in which competing theories need to be identified, developed and critically evaluated, rather than an area in which distinct disciplines

have to be brought together and applied. My suggestion is that this methodological orientation places the problems raised by Wilson and Cowell, Crittenden and Musgrave in a different light, and leaves philosophy in a far less privileged and overbearing position. I also think that other contributors to the debate, including these writers, could adopt certain practical methodological proposals flowing from the theoretical position I have just sketched, for strictly pragmatic reasons, without having to commit themselves to the philosophy which has generated them.

A pragmatic approach to the study of education

One of the very attractive features of Wilson's and Cowell's contribution in the current exchange and in previous writings is their partiality to a down-to-earth pragmatism. Notwithstanding my reservations about the compatibility of their pragmatism with their commitment to conceptual analysis, it is to their pragmatism that I appeal here.

Apart from sharing their assumption that education is a field best defined by reference to practical problems, I share their hunch that educationists have more in common than they are sometimes willing or even able (because of compartmentalization) to realize. (For me, this indicates touchstone, not a conceptual truth about 'education', and depending on the precise interpretation of Crittenden's invocation of 'common concepts', I suspect that his position and mine are very close in spirit here.) In view of the coherence theory of evidence and the theory-competition model on the one hand and on the other hand the hypothesis that considerable touchstone theory exists and more could probably be generated, the pragmatist approach is that education is not best viewed as a set of distinct disciplines to be synthesized, integrated or otherwise related, but as an area containing sets of competing theories (Walker and Evers, 1984). The proponents of the members of each set can communicate critically with each other through touchstone theory, which provides both semantic common ground and criteria for judgement between competitors: *pace* the fashionable 'incommensurability thesis', touchstone makes the theories commensurable.

Each theory in a set of competitors will involve elements from more than one traditionally or conventionally defined 'discipline'. Theories addressing problems of human learning may include mathematical, psychological, sociological, epistemological, biological and various other elements, though it need not be the case that each theory in the set includes the same combination of elements. Indeed a common criticism of certain theories of education and social mobility, for example, is that they lack a historical element and therefore fail to explain important aspects of the problems being addressed. Piagetian developmental theory contains psychological and biological statements as well as using mathematical techniques and making epistemological assumptions. Similar points could be made about social learning theory, the 'new' sociology of education, and even APE. It is, again, merely a function of conventional disciplinary compartmentalization that exponents of such theories do not always recognize that their products are so thoroughly

interdisciplinary, although some of the more outstanding figures have risen above disciplinary boundaries and highlighted the interlocking of various areas of thought and research. Piaget is an obvious example.

The point here is that given our contingent and logically unnecessary disciplinary boundaries our problem is not so much to bring epistemically distinct elements together as, paradoxically, to recognize their present co-existence within conventionally defined disciplines. The interdisciplinary problem as posed within the CSC is not only a pseudo-problem, it is incoherent: each contributing discipline is already, as it were, interdisciplinary. The moral is that the relevant epistemic units are not disciplines.

A pragmatic approach would draw academic boundaries only temporarily, and on the basis of clusters of practical problems (including research problems). If there are any worthwhile uses for the word 'discipline', this may be one of them: a discipline is constituted through a group of competing theories (including the limiting case where there is only one theory and the possibility of its abstract negation) addressing the same cluster of problems. Whereas some entities currently described as disciplines might survive such re-definition, others would not. Historically, to the extent that problems changed or were solved, disciplinary boundaries would shift.

The structural consequences for education would be that the currently recognized 'contributing disciplines' would be regarded as *educational* philosophy etc. to the extent that they addressed educational problems and would retain their disciplinary distinctiveness only insofar as they addressed distinct clusters of problems.

But this is mainly a taxonomic point. More important are the methodological aspects, which would affect the administration and conduct of education. They have already been spelled out, in general terms, elsewhere. In brief:

> First, we need to formulate competing viewpoints/theories as clearly as possible, specifying their points of agreement and disagreement, of harmony and conflict; and second we need to work out what can count as touchstone, the grounds on which dialogue can occur, disputes can be settled or at least the relative merits of competing viewpoints assessed.
>
> (Walker, 1984b, p. 6)

There will be some in education who would prefer not to think of their work as the construction of 'theory' or 'theories' but as the production of research findings, development of curricula and so forth. Others may feel that personal values and moral principles have a place in education but scarcely qualify as 'theory'. In order to avoid both lengthy exposition of an account of 'theory' and getting bogged down in disputes over the relations between theory and data, or facts and values, let me propose that we use a fairly neutral term to refer to that set of considerations, whatever the variety of its elements, that is appropriate for rational analysis and debate in education. We might refer to this as our 'set of rationally

analyzable considerations' (RAC). If there are considerations relevant to education (and Education) which are not rationally analyzable they will be excluded from the proposed methodology; but, for that matter, they will be excluded from any rational methodology. Let us, further, work out *in theoretical practice* what we are prepared to count as rational, through a process of negotiation and exploration of common ground, rather than insisting on *a priori* conceptual analysis of 'rational' designed to fix the meaning of the term and set criteria for admission into the discussion.

The general set RAC will contain subsets rac_1, rac_2, rac_3, . . . rac_n. Individual persons will no doubt subscribe to more than one rac; or, to put it another way, one's overall personal *rac* within the RAC may be subdivisible into sub-sub-sets dealing with different clusters of problems, some perhaps overlapping, some not. But one's sub-*racs* cannot be in conflict or competition with each other unless one is prepared to tolerate self-contradiction or incoherence. Although we might find such toleration occasionally inevitable, and decide that the best we can do under the circumstances is to live with an anomaly, the point of the proposed methodology is to work towards eliminating it.

Within RAC, this will require an attitude of open-minded critical discussion, a preparedness to take risks, be experimental and learn about other people's *racs*. It will be hard work, and may involve getting on top of a certain amount of hitherto unfamiliar technical material. In this process, if someone should find their *rac* internally inconsistent, or in conflict with touchstone, he or she would have the choice of admitting a mistake, explaining away the inconsistency by *ad hoc* hypotheses, or adjusting the *rac* to scrap any commitment to the touchstone criteria involved in this case. Needless to say, the second and third options, if taken, would alter the person's position in the RAC discussion, complete withdrawal being the limiting case. Of course, people can and frequently do participate in open-minded critical discussion without the proposed pragmatic framework; they can also and frequently do question the rules of a discussion. The proposed methodology requires that we make it quite plain when these things are happening and that *rac* competition take centre stage, replacing specialized 'disciplinary' research, which then has to be 'integrated' in education. Participation in, criticism of and withdrawal from the RAC debate become the key issues for educationists; otherwise specialized research is probably better conducted in other contexts, such as philosophy and psychology departments, whose RACs may be presumed to be somewhat differently constituted. There is no reason, however, why people should not participate in more than one RAC: the present point concerns the study, Education, rather than the required distribution of the interests and activities of particular individuals. It is hard to imagine the proposed education being successfully pursued without a majority of the participants making this their primary intellectual interest, but communication between education and other RACs may well be enhanced by various people straddling the boundaries which, like all boundaries, according to the epistemology I have sketched, are matters of contingent convenience relative to identification of clusters of problems.

The methodology is of course open to criticism: it becomes part of RAC, and, like any other part, would be subject to change and modification, or rejection. Like any other *rac,* it

should be accepted only provisionally.

It will be apparent that the practical steps for implementation of the RAC methodology differ from Wilson's and Cowell's proposals for elite, expert, small, compact, philosopher-led teams. The RAC proposal, like any pragmatic scheme, should begin where it can: basically it requires people who are willing to participate in the required kind of discussion, whatever their current disciplinary affiliation or level of competence. It requires, however, that all participants be prepared to look critically at current disciplinary boundaries and therefore at their own affiliations; and it requires that all participants work at raising their level of competence, perhaps through developing new competences. It does not assume, *a priori,* as Wilson and Cowell do, which competences must assume priority. In general, it is a democratic rather than hierarchical model. Unlike Wilson's and Cowell's program of elite teams located in institutions, the present proposal could be implemented in many contexts: journals, conferences, as part of curricula in education as well as in specific institution-based research and development projects.

It cannot be assumed, however, that believers in the CSC should be required, *a priori,* to recant. Whether or not I am right about the soundness of the CSC, it is the case that the CSC, precisely because it is the CSC, corresponds to the self-consciousness of a majority of educationists, and is reflected in present administrative divisions as well as the divisions of labour and therefore distributions of competence. The pragmatist cannot brush this aside. The CSC may be mistaken or illusory, but mistakes and illusions can be the basis for practice and have practical consequences. In this case one such consequence is the determination of the beliefs and skills of most of those being invited to reconsider their position in RAC; where reconsideration is compatible with various outcomes, and cannot require much more than an open mind and preparedness for hard work. Nor should it be assumed, in an epistemically vast and complex world in which education is but a small and relatively lowly part, that we will be able to eliminate all unjustified epistemologies and divisions of academic labour.

The secondary task, after getting the *rac*-competition model working, is to coordinate such specialized expertise as does currently exist, particularly in central areas of touchstone. Without wishing to prejudge the issue, let me speculate that we might find that competences in mathematics, statistics, logic, semantics, and such very generally applicable procedures became very important. Their application is not a matter of synthesis so much as co-ordination; for as I have said, these elements are already there in a variety of *racs*: what they need is competent development to ensure maximum payoff in the contribution of competing *racs* to RAC. If people want another, second, use of 'discipline', this division of specialized competences may be it. Plainly the kind of need being stressed here is part of what other contributors to the present discussion have recognized and wish to meet.

This should not be confused with either the proliferation of verbally distinct conceptual schemes which mask considerable common areas of substance as between the 'disciplines' conventionally defined, or with the forms of knowledge doctrine. I have criticized the latter; the former will also be a problem in clarifying competing *racs* and identifying

touchstone. Epistemological issues, for example, may be *described* differently, and the same may be differently formulated in educational psychology, sociology and philosophy: what is necessary is to distinguish between (1) genuine competing theories/*racs,* and (2) alternative languages which can be translated into one another. My view is that there exist numerous instances of both. We need to be able to distinguish real from merely verbal differences. (This would also make life easier for many students in departments and schools of education.) But we will not be able to do this properly until we get under way the methodology of seeking common ground and identifying divergent views. Thus while I agree with Crittenden that we should seek out conceptual common ground (though not by conceptual analysis) this is only one part of the search for touchstone and needs to be done within the context of the *rac*-competition approach.

I think that even if certain readers continue with the view that the CSC is correct and that our problem is to bring together contributing disciplines to assist us with practical educational problems, then so long as they agree that there are different opinions about how to do this, they could do worse than try out the proposed methodology to sharpen up and implement the CSC. It would be a pragmatic and realistic way of pursuing that goal. All that would be required of such readers is that they keep an open mind on the CSC, admitting that it might prove inadequate or incorrect, as might the *rac*-competition method. But this is no more than a rational person should be prepared to do for any opinion. Open-mindedness is a very pragmatic and practical virtue.

Acknowledgement

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9

(i) WHAT IS AN EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE?

Wilfred Carr

I

It has become rather fashionable these days to extol the virtues of educational practice. Teacher-education should be more firmly based on it, educational theorising made more relevant to it, and teacher educators should have more experience of it. Given this state of affairs, it is surprising to find that educational philosophers who willingly argue about the meaning of 'educational theory' seem rather reluctant to discuss how the concept of 'educational practice' ought to be understood.[1] Indeed, it seems to be assumed that the meaning of 'educational practice' is so straightforward and clear that we can safely rely on our common-sense understanding when we use the term in educational discussions and debates. The possibility that our common sense may, in this instance, be in need of philosophical examination does not seem to have been seriously considered or explored.

But suppose it were the case that our common-sense understanding of educational practice was radically ambiguous and incoherent. Suppose, further, that the defects in our concept of educational practice not only pre-date modern forms of educational theorising, but actually paved the way for their evolution and growth. If this were the case, if, that is, our concept of educational theory *and* our concept of educational practice both emanated from the same dubious historical source, then we could expect certain difficulties to arise. We could, for example, expect to find that all our efforts to make educational theory 'practically relevant' were constantly breaking down. Despite our best intentions, the 'gap' between theory and practice would stubbornly remain. We could also expect to find that any philosophical enquiry into the meaning of 'educational practice' which simply concentrated on how this concept is now used, would fail to detect the inherited weaknesses which our modern concept contained. Indeed, a philosophy of education committed to this kind of 'conceptual analysis' would offer nothing but an empty silence concerning the numerous philosophical puzzles to which our ambiguous and incoherent understanding of educational practice inevitably gave rise.

The argument of this paper is that these suppositions are largely true, and hence that our contemporary concept of educational practice is the end-product of an historical process through which an older, more comprehensive and more coherent concept has been gradually transformed and changed. Given this thesis, it is not my intention to treat the title of this paper as an invitation to analyse the ways in which the concept of educational practice is at present understood. On the contrary, I intend to regard it as an open invitation to allow the history of the concept to expose possibilities of meaning which are very different from those now encountered in contemporary use.

In order to respond to the question in this way, I have set myself three specific tasks. The first is to show why attempts to analyse the concept of 'practice' which focus on its relationship to 'theory' fail to furnish us with a satisfactory understanding of what an educational practice is. The second is to argue that this failure is in part due to the absence of any historical exegesis of the concept of 'practice' – a state of affairs which itself exemplifies the common belief that concepts can be philosophically analysed apart from their history. The third is to show that once we are prepared to give historical depth to philosophical analysis, it becomes possible to spell out a core concept of practice which not only illuminates some of the incoherences in our present conception of educational practice, but also offers a more satisfactory understanding of why it is that education is understood as a practice at all.

II

In education, as elsewhere, the notion of 'practice' is used in different and, sometimes, incompatible ways. It is used, for example, to refer both to an activity undertaken in order to acquire certain capacities and skills ('teaching practice') and to an activity which demonstrates that these competences and skills have already been acquired ('good practice'). Normally, this ambiguity does not give rise to confusion: the context in which the notion occurs is sufficient to indicate the particular way it is being used.

What do give rise to some confusions, however, are those occasions when the concept of 'practice' is defined and understood in terms of its relationship to theory. The most common way of understanding this relationship is, of course, as one of opposition. On this view, 'practice' is everything that 'theory' is not. 'Theory' is concerned with universal, context-free generalisations; 'practice' with particular context-dependent instances. 'Theory' deals with abstract ideas; 'practice' with concrete realities. Theorising is largely immune from the pressures of time; practice is responsive to the contingent demands of everyday life. Solutions to theoretical problems are found in knowing something; practical problems can only be solved by doing something. As one exponent of this 'oppositional' view puts it, 'a theoretical problem does not specify any occasion or situation in which it must be solved . . . but a practical problem can only be solved by taking action in a certain situation at a certain time'.[2]

When applied to the field of education, however, this view of practice is always

unsatisfactory. For example, certain educational problems (What should I teach? What should I include in the 'core' curriculum?) are clearly 'practical' in the sense that they are problems about what to do. At the same time, however, they are 'general' rather than 'particular', 'abstract' rather than 'concrete', and relatively 'context-free'. Conversely, there are many educational problems that are 'specific', 'immediate' and 'context-dependent' (What are the major impediments to the introduction in this school of GCSE?) even though they are 'theoretical' in the sense that they are requests for knowledge rather than action. The situation is further complicated by the fact that there are numerous educational situations in which the practical point at issue is what to do about some theoretical claim (Should I group pupils on the assumption that claims about innate differences in intelligence are true?). In such cases, the practical situation may call for immediate action based on a timeless question that has been debated 'in theory' since the time of Plato.

Thus, the general weakness of this 'oppositional' view is that it generates criteria for 'practice' which, when applied to the notion of an *educational* practice, exclude too much. By seeing 'theory' and 'practice' as mutually exclusive and diametrically opposed concepts, it tends to neglect those aspects of educational practice which are not constrained by criteria of immediacy, particularity, context-dependency and the like. And, by emphasising the difference between knowledge and action, it tends to ignore the essential role in educational practice that theoretical generalisations and abstract ideas can play. In short, by making the twin assumptions that all practice is non-theoretical and all theory is non-practical, this approach always underestimates the extent to which those who engage in educational practices have to reflect upon, and hence theorise about, what, in general, they are trying to do.

The predictable reaction to these deficiencies has been the emergence of various accounts of educational practice which focus on its dependence on, rather than its opposition to, theory. Drawing on familiar philosophical arguments about the indispensability of conceptual schemes or the role of 'paradigms' in everyday life,[3] these analyses emphasise that, since all practice presupposes a more or less coherent set of assumptions and beliefs, it is, to this extent, always guided by a framework of theory. Thus, on this view, all practice, like all observation, is 'theory-laden'. 'Practice' is not opposed to theory, but is itself governed by an implicit theoretical framework which structures and guides the activities of those engaged in practical pursuits.

It follows from this kind of analysis that since all practice is theory-laden, this will be just as true for the most simple practice (e.g. asking a pupil a question) as for those more complex cases in which the dependence on theory is more explicit and overt (e.g. using micro-computers to implement Skinnerian principles of learning). It thus needs to be emphasised that, on this account, the notion of 'theory-guided practice' can be used in two quite different ways. In the first place, it can be used to make the point that all practice necessarily presupposes a conceptual framework. But secondly, it may also be used to describe those occasions when practitioners appropriate externally produced theory to guide them in their practical pursuits.

Just as the problem with the oppositional view of educational practice is that it excludes too much, so the general problem with the 'theory-guided' view is that it excludes too little. Indeed, on this view, educational practice can be guided both by a 'theory' that is nothing other than tacit, implicit and unarticulated common sense as well as the 'theory' that is produced through systematic disciplined enquiry. But the most important difficulty with this view is that it does not adequately recognise that educational practice is never guided by theory alone. This is so because 'theory', whether implicit and tacit or explicit and overt, is always a set of general beliefs, while 'practice' always involves taking action in a particular situation. Although practice may be guided by some implicit theoretical principles about what, in general, ought to be done, the decision to invoke or apply such principles in a particular situation cannot itself be guided or determined by theoretical beliefs. For this would entail an infinite regress of first-order theoretical precepts (about what, in general, ought to be done) guided by second-order meta-theoretical precepts (about if and when to apply first-order theoretical precepts) and so on. Because practitioners are not subject to this infinite regress, their judgements about the applicability of general principles to particular situations cannot themselves be determined by theoretical principles or rules.

If educational practice cannot be reduced to a form of theorising, can educational theorising be reduced to a form of practice? One of the most influential attempts to pursue this line of thought is Gilbert Ryle's well-known attempt to assert the autonomy of practice.[4] Ryle develops his argument by showing that since one cannot 'know that' something is the case unless one already 'knows how' to do a vast number of things, '"know-how" is a concept logically prior to "know that"'.[5] This not only entails that 'practice is not the step-child of theory'[6] but quite the reverse; 'efficient practice precedes the theory of it'.[7] Indeed, Ryle concludes that theorising is itself a form of practice, requiring skill, competence and know-how of various kinds. ('Theorising is one practice among others and is itself intelligently or stupidly conducted.')[8]

The fact that Ryle is so effective in refuting the idea that practice is guided by some prior act of theorising should not conceal how, by equating practice to 'knowing how' to perform various operations or skills, he employs it in a way that is more narrow and restricted than might first appear.[9] Nor should it cause us to forget that an educational practice always involves much more than 'knowing how' to do something in this Rylean sense. For a definitive feature of an *educational* practice is that it is an ethical activity undertaken in pursuit of educationally worthwhile ends. Moreover, as Professor Peters has so frequently pointed out, these ends are not some independently determined 'good' to which educational practice is the instrumental means. Rather they define the rules of conduct, or, in Peter's phrase, the 'principles of procedure' which constitute a practice as an educational practice and justify its description in these terms.[10]

To engage in an educational practice it is thus never sufficient (though it is always necessary) to 'know how' to do a variety of things. We can, for example, consistently assert that a certain teaching method is competently and skilfully performed (e.g. the

techniques of behaviour-modification) yet deny that it is an educational practice. To make this assertion is not to claim that this form of teaching is ineffective but that it is incompatible with those ethical principles by which any educational practice must be informed. This is not to say that, in order to engage in an educational practice, these ethical principles need to be translated into a set of codified rules which can then be used to guide practice in an educationally worthwhile direction. It is simply to point out that the educational character of any practice can only be made intelligible by reference to an ethical disposition to proceed according to some more or less tacit understanding of what it is to act educationally. Where this disposition is present, a practitioner may, irrespective of his 'know-how' or skill, practise in an educational way. But where it is absent, a practitioner who 'knows how' to practise in a Rylean sense will be quite incapable of practising in an educational sense at all.

The simple lesson of the argument so far is that the three accounts of practice I have identified are all inadequate for determining how the concept of educational practice ought to be understood. One conclusion that could be inferred is that it reinforces the suspicion that a question like 'what is an educational practice?' is wholly misconceived. 'Practice' has such a plethora of meanings that the search for criteria which can provide our concept of educational practice with some kind of definitive meaning presupposes that it has a unity and simplicity which it patently does not.

But another, less obvious, conclusion may be that it is not the question that is misconceived but our presumptions about how it is to be answered. For it may be plausible to suggest that the reason why these accounts of practice do not enable us to make our concept of an educational practice more intelligible is not that they are false. It may well be that the three features of a practice to which they draw attention (its opposition to theory; its dependence on theory; its independence of theory) are all necessary features of an educational practice as well. But by accentuating only one of these features, to the exclusion of the others, each of these different accounts may only be offering an incomplete, one-sided, version of what an educational practice may be. Once they are looked at in this way, these accounts of practice no longer appear as three incompatible alternatives from which we have to choose. They can instead be seen to be three incomplete analyses of a practice, each of which is limited by two false assumptions.

The first of these is that the meaning and significance of practice can only be determined by clarifying how it relates to theory, so that to understand what a practice is, it is always necessary to understand this relationship. The second shared assumption is that 'practice' is a stable and static concept, so that in any philosophical analysis of its meaning, its history will only be of incidental or antiquarian interest. But once these two assumptions are challenged, it becomes possible to interpret the criteria of 'practice' provided by each of these analyses in a very different way. It becomes plausible to interpret them, not as mutually exclusive criteria, but as three essential features of a historically prior concept of practice for which problems about its relationship to theory do not arise.

To interpret matters in this way is thus to suggest that the various criteria surrounding our present concept of practice are nothing other than the fragmented relics of a previous

concept of practice which, though it can no longer find adequate expression, nevertheless continues to convey something of its original meaning and assert something of its original form. It is also to suggest that we ought to be able to produce a historical reconstruction of this concept which will enable us to clarify some of the ambiguity surrounding its contemporary meaning and use. But is it appropriate to try to answer a question like 'what is an educational practice?' in this way? Much of the contemporary philosophy of education asserts that it is not. Indeed, the intellectual predilections now cultivated by the academic study of education encourage us to believe that philosophical analysis is one thing and the history of ideas is something else. But are we right to construe the relationship between the philosophy and the history of education in this way? To this question I now, albeit briefly, wish to turn.

III

An ancient statue of a Roman god will have a history. It is a history of a stable and unchanging object which has continued to exhibit the same essential features over time. As such, it reminds us of the time and place in which it was produced and so helps us to understand the particular culture and form of social life which it expresses and represents. The concepts we use to describe this statue will also have histories. But the history of concepts like 'religious', or 'god', is not the history of an unchanging object displaying the same essential features throughout time. Concepts are not kept in museums to remind us of the particular form of life in which they have their origins or roots. They continue to be used and, in continuing to be used, they change. How concepts like 'religious' and 'god' are used at any given time and place will vary as social life varies. Conversely, as changes in social life occur so changes in the meaning of concepts will occur as well.[11]

The simple reason why this is so is that conceptual structures and social structures are neither separable nor distinct.[12] Concepts are socially embedded and a form of social life is partially constituted by concepts. So, for example, the differences between the ancient Greek concepts of 'democracy', 'citizen' and 'justice' and the contemporary English usages of these terms signify not simply a linguistic difference, but a difference between two forms of social life. Thus, one important way of understanding the concept of 'practice' available to any given historical period would be to uncover the rules governing its use in language and social life. Similarly, one important way of identifying changes that are occurring in our own culture may be by noting changes in the way that the concept of 'practice' is now being used.

The fact that conceptual change and social change are two elements in one essentially dialectical process should not encourage us to assume that this process can somehow occur without direct human intervention. Nor, in particular, should it cause us to overlook the important part that philosophical enquiry can play in influencing this process. For if a philosophical analysis can succeed in revealing that the way in which a concept is being

used is in need of major modification or revision, then it may thereby assist in the process of changing its everyday interpretation and use. Philosophical analysis of what concepts mean and changing social life are thus not necessarily independent tasks. Indeed, it may well be that the role now played by the concept of 'practice' in social life is partially due to the way in which it has been analysed by philosophers in some previous era.[13]

To see the history of the concept of 'practice' in these terms is thus to recognise the limitations of any philosophical enquiry which restricts itself to analysing that version of the concept which our own cultural milieu happens to provide. It is also to concede that the only sure antidote to this kind of conceptual parochialism is to bring our own contemporary understanding of the concept of practice face to face with a historical account of how it has been understood in the past. Unless we are prepared to allow the history of the concept of practice to break down our present-day preconceptions in this way, then we may be deprived of important clues for detecting possible confusions and distortions in the way the concept is now used.

Interpreted as a request for historical intelligibility (rather than an analysis of contemporary usage), the question 'what is an educational practice?' presages a form of enquiry committed to the combined tasks of historical reconstruction and philosophical critique. What we could expect such an enquiry to reveal is that the concept of an educational practice is largely explicable in terms of four characteristic historical features.

The first is that our present concept of an educational practice has its origins within the conceptual structures of a form of life which has long since disappeared and, hence, that it can only be made fully intelligible by understanding it as a survival from a social context very different from our own.

The second is that, in this transition from one social context to another, what it means to talk of education as a practice will have changed. Thus, we should be prepared to find that, in the transition from the context in which it was originally at home to our own contemporary culture, an educational practice became something other than it once was. But what, thirdly, we should also expect to find is that such changes in the concept will not be so complete as to eradicate its original meaning or totally detach it from its historical roots. So it should be unsurprising to discover that, as new conceptions of an educational practice emerge, fragments of an older concept will continue to assert themselves and break through. The history of concepts is one of continuity as well as change.

What, finally, we would expect a full-length history of the concept of an educational practice to reveal are those occasions where changes to its meaning may have been assisted by abstract philosophical beliefs about the nature of education itself. It is only by first appreciating the extent to which our present concept of an educational practice relies on the educational ideas and arguments of our philosophical ancestors that we can critically assess the extent to which this present-day concept can be philosophically vindicated and sustained.

The question 'what is an educational practice?' can now be recast in the following more precise and more answerable form: can we discover a historically specific concept of

'practice' which enables us to reconcile the seemingly irreconcilable range of criteria governing its present use? Can we recover from history a core concept of practice which is more compelling for education than our own? The answer I intend to provide is that we can, and that it turns out to be the classical concept of 'practice' which has always exercised a decisive influence on education and which has only been finally discarded in our own modern times. This concept of practice owes much to the philosophy of Aristotle. It was he who initiated the search for the forms of knowledge and rationality appropriate to practical action. And it is only through a historical understanding of his account of 'practice' that we shall be able to appreciate why it is that education is now construed as a practice at all.

IV

Although the Greek word *praxis* has a meaning roughly corresponding to our term 'practice', the conceptual structures within which it had its proper place are very different from our own. For, in its classical context, 'practice' referred to a distinctive way of life – the *bios praktikos* – a life devoted to right living through the pursuit of the human good. It was distinguishable from a life devoted to *theoria* (*bios theoretikos*) – the contemplative way of life of the philosopher or the scientist – in terms both of its end and the means of pursuing this end.[14]

Thus, the Greek distinction between theory and practice has very little to do with the way in which the distinction is now drawn. It is not a distinction between knowledge and action, thinking and doing, 'knowing that' and 'knowing how'. Rather it is a way of articulating two different forms of socially embedded human activities, each with its own intellectual commitments and its own moral demands. It is thus unsurprising to find that in their discussions about *theoria* and *praxis,* the Greeks rarely found it necessary to discuss the relationship between the two. For them, the modern philosophical problem of whether theory and practice are, or are not, independent of each other, would probably have made little sense.[15]

A problem about practice to which the Greeks did attach philosophical importance was that of clarifying the forms of knowledge and rationality appropriate to practical thought and action. One way of reading the *Nichomachean Ethics* is as a brilliant attempt to resolve this problem by elucidating the epistemological presuppositions of *praxis.* In doing this, Aristotle not only opened up that tradition of 'practical philosophy' which henceforth was to provide the *bios praktikos* with its major source of theoretical expression and support. He also articulated a range of conceptual distinctions which now enable us to distinguish beliefs about 'practice' which belong to this tradition from beliefs which do not.

The most important of these distinctions is not between theory and practice but between two forms of human action – *praxis* and *poiesis* – a distinction which can only be rendered in English by our much less precise notions of 'doing something' and 'making something'. *Poiesis* – 'making action' – is action the end of which is to bring some specific product or

artifact into existence. Because the end of *poiesis* is an object which is known prior to action, it is guided by a form of knowledge which Aristotle called *techne* – and what we would now call technical knowledge or expertise. *Poiesis* is thus a species of rule-following action. It is what Weber was to call 'purposive–rational' action and what we would call instrumental action. For Aristotle and the Greeks, the activities of shipbuilders, craftsmen and artisans were paradigm cases of *poiesis* guided by *techne*.

Although 'practice' (*praxis*) is also action directed towards the achievement of some end, it differs from *poiesis* in several crucial respects. In the first place, the end of a practice is not to produce an object or artifact but to realise some morally worthwhile 'good'. But, secondly, practice is not a neutral instrument by means of which this 'good' can be produced. The 'good' for the sake of which a practice is pursued cannot be 'made', it can only be 'done'. 'Practice' is a form of 'doing action' precisely because its end can only be realised 'through' action and can only exist in the action itself.

Thus, thirdly, practice can never be understood as a form of technical expertise designed to achieve some externally related end. Nor can these ends be specified in advance of engaging in a practice. Indeed, *praxis* is different from *poiesis* precisely because discernment of the 'good' which constitutes its end is inseparable from a discernment of its mode of expression. 'Practice' is thus what we would call morally informed or morally committed action. Within the Aristotelean tradition all ethical, political and social activities were regarded as forms of practice. And so too, of course, was education.

Another way in which practice differs from *poiesis* is that its ends are neither immutable nor fixed. Instead, they are constantly revised as the 'goods' intrinsic to practice are progressively pursued. Thus, while it is always possible, and frequently desirable, to produce a theoretical specification of what the ends of *poiesis* should be, the ends of practice cannot be determined in this way. Rather, what they are at any given time can only be made intelligible in terms of the inherited and largely unarticulated body of practical knowledge which constitutes the tradition within which the good intrinsic to a practice is enshrined. To practise is thus never a matter of individuals accepting and implementing some rational account of what the 'aims' of their practice should be. It is always a matter of being initiated into the knowledge, understandings and beliefs[16] bequeathed by that tradition through which the practice has been conveyed to us in its present shape.[17]

A 'practice', then, is always the achievement of a tradition, and it is only by submitting to its authority that practitioners can begin to acquire the practical knowledge and standards of excellence by means of which their own practical competence can be judged.[18] But the authoritative nature of a tradition does not make it immune to criticism. The practical knowledge made available through tradition is not simply reproduced; it is also constantly re-interpreted and revised through dialogue and discussion about how to pursue the practical goods which constitute the tradition.[19] It is precisely because it embodies this process of critical reconstruction that a tradition evolves and changes rather than remains static or fixed. When the ethical aims of a practice are officially deemed to be either uncontentious or impervious to rational discussion, the notions of practical knowledge and tradition will

tend to be used in a wholly negative way.[20]

Rational discussion about how the ethical ends of a practice were to be interpreted and pursued was what Aristotle took 'practical philosophy' to be all about.[21] It is the 'science' which seeks to raise the practical knowledge embedded in tradition to the level of reflective awareness and, through critical argument, to correct and transcend the limitations of what within this tradition has hitherto been thought, said and done. Thus the persistence, within this kind of practical philosophy, of incommensurable historical 'philosophies' about what the aims of a practice should be is neither a sign of its irrationality nor a source of intellectual embarrassment. On the contrary, it is the continuing presence of contesting philosophical viewpoints that provides the oppositional tension essential for critical thinking to perform its transforming role. Once deprived of this critical tension, 'practical philosophy' will quickly degenerate into a chronologically arranged catalogue of philosophical creeds and its relationship to practice will become increasingly difficult to discern.

Although, for Aristotle, practical philosophy is a 'science', it is not a 'theoretical science' entirely devoted to pursuing knowledge of the 'good'. Nor is it a 'productive science' yielding ethically neutral knowledge of effective skills and techniques. Rather it is a 'practical science' yielding knowledge of how to promote the good through morally right action. However, although practical philosophy offers generalisations about the ends of a practice and how they ought to be pursued, this kind of knowledge is never sufficient to determine what a practitioner ought to do. For, in the first place, such knowledge is always imprecise: it merely states the general directions that practical action ought to take. And, secondly, while practical philosophy can only provide general guidance, practice is itself always particular and has to take account of the changing conditions under which it has to operate. For these reasons practical philosophy cannot be used simply as a source of theoretical statements from which practical implications can be logically informed. For these reasons, also, practical philosophy cannot achieve the status of an 'exact' science and has to rest content with providing guidance of a 'more or less' or 'in most cases' character.

Since the ends of a practice always remain indeterminate and cannot be fixed in advance, it always requires a form of reasoning in which choice and judgement play a crucial role. This form of reasoning is, for Aristotle, distinguishable from technical forms of reasoning by virtue of its overall purpose, and the structure of the reasoning it employs.

The overall purpose of technical reasoning is to consider the relative effectiveness of action as a means to some known end – as, for example, when a teacher has to decide between 'phonic' and 'whole-word' approaches to the teaching of reading solely on the basis of their effectiveness in producing some specific outcome. By contrast, the overall purpose of practical reasoning is to decide what to do when faced with competing and, perhaps, conflicting moral ideals. Practical reasoning is thus most clearly exemplified in the thoughts and actions of those faced with a moral conflict or a moral dilemma. It is required, for example, when an individual has to decide whether to put loyalty to a friend before patriotic duty, or when a teacher has to decide whether it is educationally more desirable to segregate pupils on the basis of their ability or to adopt a 'mixed-ability'

approach. More generally, practical reasoning is required when practitioners have to decide on a course of action where it may only be possible to respect one value at the expense of another. In such cases, a practitioner cannot resort to a form of reasoning which relies on technical calculations to determine what course of action is correct. Practical reasoning is not a method for determining *how* to do something, but for deciding what *ought* to be done. This form of reasoning is, for Aristotle, 'generically different' from technical reasoning and involves proceeding in a measured or 'deliberative fashion'.[22]

Although, in deliberative reasoning, both the means and ends of action are open to question, what is deliberated upon is not ends but means. However, it would be quite wrong to infer from this that means and ends can be characterised independently of each other. For, in choosing between alternative means, practitioners must also reflect on the alternative ethical ends which supply them with criteria for their choice. If the alternative means are simply different ways of achieving the same ethical end, then the question is simply an instrumental question about their relative effectiveness. Where, however, alternative means are means to different ethical ends, then the practitioner has to deliberate about these ends as possible alternative means to some further all-embracing end. Thus, deliberation is not a way of resolving technical problems for which there is, in principle, some correct answer. Rather, it is a way of resolving those moral dilemmas which occur when different ethically desirable ends entail different, and perhaps incompatible courses of action.

The formal structure of deliberative reasoning is that of the practical syllogism, where the major premise is a practical principle stating what in general ought to be done (e.g. people with personal difficulties ought to be treated with consideration) and the minor premise asserts a particular instance falling under this major premise (this person has just lost his wife). Thus, the method of deliberative reasoning is, like the hypothetico-deductive method of scientific reasoning, effected through a syllogistic argument in which a particular case is subsumed under a general principle. But the practical syllogism differs from the ordinary syllogism in at least two crucial respects.

First, the conclusion of a practical syllogism is not a statement prescribing 'what ought to be done', which is analogous to the statements describing 'what is the case' with which ordinary syllogisms conclude. The conclusion of a practical syllogism is an *action* which, precisely because it issues from a deliberate process of moving from premises to conclusions, is the outcome of a process of reasoning rather than shrewd guess-work or pure chance. Secondly, this action, though the product of deductively valid reasoning, is not 'right' action in the sense that it has been proved to be correct. It is 'right' action because it is *reasoned* action that can be defended discursively in argument and justified as morally appropriate to the particular circumstances in which it was taken.[23] Moreover, in deliberative reasoning, it is always conceded that there may be more than one ethical principle that can supply the content to a major premise and that there is no formula for methodically determining which one should be invoked in a particular practical situation. It is for this reason that Aristotle insists that collective deliberation by the many is always preferable

to the isolated deliberation of the individual.

It is for this reason, also, that good deliberation is entirely dependent on the possession of what Aristotle calls *phronesis,* which we would translate as 'practical wisdom'. *Phronesis* is the virtue of knowing which general ethical principle to apply in a particular situation. For Aristotle, *phronesis* is the supreme intellectual virtue and an indispensable feature of practice. The *phronimos* – the man of practical wisdom – is the man who sees the particularities of his practical situation in the light of their ethical significance and acts consistently on this basis. Without practical wisdom, deliberation degenerates into an intellectual exercise, and 'good practice' becomes indistinguishable from instrumental cleverness. The man who lacks *phronesis* may be technically accountable, but he can never be morally answerable.

Hence, 'practical wisdom' is manifest in a knowledge of what is required in a particular moral situation, and a willingness to act so that this knowledge can take a concrete form. It is thus a comprehensive moral capacity which combines practical knowledge of the good with sound judgement about what, in a particular situation, would constitute an appropriate expression of this good. For this reason 'judgement' is an essential element in practical wisdom. But it is not the judgement of the umpire impartially applying a set of codified rules. Rather, it is that form of wise and prudent judgement which takes account of what would be morally appropriate and fitting in a particular situation.[24]

'Judgement' is thus a crucial term in the equation linking deliberation and practical wisdom with action. Deliberating well is a mark of *phronesis* and *phronesis* is the union of good judgement and action. What is distinctive of the *phronimos* is that his deliberations lead, by way of judgement, to practice. And what is distinctive of practice is that it bears a constitutive relationship to practical knowledge, deliberation and the pursuit of the human good. It is this concept of practice from which our own concept has evolved and, if my argument is at all plausible, it is the concept of practice which will better enable us to answer the question posed in the title of this paper. It is to this question that I now wish to return.

V

One of my main aims has been to show how a self-conscious awareness of the historical roots of the concept of practice helps us to understand why current attempts to analyse the concept run into the sort of difficulties that they do. Another has been to show how these difficulties are largely the product of the widespread assumption that practice can only be adequately analysed by means of an a-historical enquiry into the kind of relationship to theory that it may, or may not, have. Because of this, the conceptual distinctions crucial for any philosophical elucidation of what constitutes an educational practice are always drawn at the wrong point. For what the history of the concept clearly reveals is that the important conceptual distinctions are not those between theory and practice, knowledge and action, or 'knowing how' and 'knowing that'. Rather,

they are distinctions between different kinds of action (*poiesis* and *praxis,* ethically enlightened action and technically effective action), and the forms of knowledge appropriate to them (*techne* and *phronesis,* technical knowledge and practical knowledge). What, in effect, I have tried to show is that the failure to recognise the importance of these distinctions has left our concept of practice confused. As a result, our understanding of why education is construed as a practice has become increasingly difficult to articulate and describe.

Once the importance of these distinctions is acknowledged, it becomes clear why characterisations of educational practice which focus on its relationship to theory always break down. It becomes clear, for example, that, since educational practice is always guided by some theory about the ethical goods internal to that practice, it cannot be made intelligible in terms of an opposition to theory. But at the same time, it becomes equally clear why this does not mean that educational practice can be sufficiently characterised as a theory-guided pursuit. For what is distinctive of an educational practice is that it is guided, not just by some general practical theory, but also by the exigencies of the practical situation in which this theory is to be applied. Thus, the guidance given by theory always has to be moderated by the guidance given by *phronesis* – wise and prudent judgement about if, and to what extent, this 'theory' ought to be invoked and enacted in a concrete case.

The fact that educational practice cannot be properly characterised as 'theory-dependent' or 'theory-guided' should not be taken to add credibility to the view that it is simply a species of theory-free 'know-how' of a Rylean kind. What is distinctive of *praxis* is that it is a form of reflexive action which can itself transform the 'theory' which guides it. *Poiesis* is a form of non-reflexive 'know-how' precisely because it does not itself change its guiding *techne.* For *praxis,* however, theory is as subject to change as is practice itself. Neither theory nor practice is pre-eminent; each is continuously being modified and revised by the other.

Educational practice cannot be made intelligible as a form of *poiesis* guided by fixed ends and governed by determinate rules. It can only be made intelligible as a form of *praxis* guided by ethical criteria immanent in educational practice itself: criteria which serve to distinguish genuine educational practices from those that are not, and good educational practice from that which is indifferent or bad. While some people now want to reduce educational practice to a kind of 'making action' through which some raw material can be moulded into a pre-specifiable shape, educational practitioners continue to experience it as a species of 'doing action' governed by complex and sometimes competing ethical ends which may themselves be modified in the light of practical circumstances and particular conditions. It is in these terms that many educational practitioners understand their work. And it is in terms provided by the concepts and language of *praxis* that many of them would want to define and defend the essential features of their educational and professional role.

It is, also, something like this concept of practice that permeates Professor Peters' successive attempts to vindicate a view of education as a non-instrumental process concerned

to promote intrinsically worthwhile ends.[25] Indeed, it seems to me that many of the standard criticisms of Peters' original analysis arise primarily because what he was actually analysing was not 'the' concept of education, but the conception of education as a form of *praxis* which was undergoing historical transformation and change. Thus, it is interesting to note that the counter-examples adduced to refute Peters' original analysis[26] refer either to a concept of education used in a form of life in which the notion of *praxis* was not available (i.e. Spartan education), or to those modern uses of education which indicate how the concept of education as a form of *praxis* is not being displaced (i.e. vocational education, specialist education). It is not surprising, therefore, that, the burden of Peters' attempts to accommodate these counter-examples has to be borne by a historical analysis designed to show how major social changes – such as the impact of industrialism and the emergence of mass schooling – have led to changes in the ways in which the concept of education is now used.[27]

'What is an educational practice?' The answer I have tried to provide is one which is firmly grounded in those developments in post-analytic philosophy which seek to re-establish the classical concept of 'practice' in the modern world.[28] Clearly, any further elaboration of this answer would benefit from a close inspection of the attempts in curriculum theory, evaluation and research to create a renewed awareness of educational practice as the achievement of a tradition rather than as a form of craft-knowledge or technical expertise.[29] It is equally clear that to suggest, as I have, that R.S. Peters' philosophy should be placed in the context of this tradition,[30] is not only to propose that the recent history of the philosophy of education needs to be rewritten. It is also to anticipate a discussion about the future of the philosophy of education, which starts from a view about 'what a practice is' rather than a view about 'what philosophy is'. It is thus to foreshadow the re-emergence of educational philosophy as a species of 'practical philosophy' explicitly, committed to that concept of practice which has always provided education with its primary definition. Within our dominant contemporary culture, this concept of practice has been rendered marginal and now faces something approaching total effacement. As new concepts of educational practice are emerging, so the older concepts of practical wisdom, deliberation and judgement are being eroded. By re-affirming its traditional commitments and roles, the philosophy of education may be better able to promote the integrity of educational practice and oppose all those cultural tendencies which now undermine and degrade it.

Notes

1. As far as I can tell, neither the *Journal of Philosophy of Education,* nor its predecessor, contains any papers explicitly concerned with the concept of educational practice. What is available in the general philosophical literature, and what has influenced the argument of this paper more than anything else, are the various discussions of 'practice' in the work of Hans-Georg Gadamer. See in particular Gadamer (1967, 1980b, 1981).

2. Gauthier (1963), p. 2.

3. This is a strategy I tried to employ in my own (1980) attempt to explain the gap between theory and practice in education. It also forms part of Professor Hirst's (1983) analysis of educational theory.

4. Ryle (1949).

5. *Ibid.*

6. *Ibid.*

7. *Ibid.*

8. *Ibid.*

9. Several critical studies make this point. See, for example, Martin (1961), pp. 59–62.

10. See, in particular, Peters (1959, 1965).

11. This is of course a Wittgensteinian insight which was developed with considerable skill by Winch (1968).

12. The relationship between conceptual change and social change is discussed in some detail by Skinner (1980).

13. This view of the role of philosophy in social change has its roots in Hegel. For a fuller account see Taylor (1984).

14. The history of the concept of practice is covered in some detail by Lobkowicz (1967).

15. Historical explanations of how and why this became a problem are offered by Lobkowicz (1977) and Gadamer (1967, 1981).

16. What Gadamer (1980a) refers to as 'pre-judgement', 'for-conceptions' and 'prejudices'.

17. The epistemological role of the notion of tradition has been stressed by writers as diverse as Oakeshott (1966), Gadamer (1980a), MacIntyre (1981) and Bernstein (1983).

18. Gadamer (1980a) puts the point vividly: 'That which has been sanctioned by tradition has an authority that is nameless' (p. 249). The authoritative nature of tradition is also central to the arguments of Oakeshott (1966) and MacIntyre (1981).

19. Again, the point is eloquently put by Gadamer (1980a): 'Tradition is not simply a precondition into which we come, but we produce it ourselves, in so much as we understand, participate in the evolution of tradition and hence further determine it ourselves' (p. 261).

20. The claim that our own modern culture has discarded tradition for just these reasons is, of course, central to the argument of MacIntyre's *After Virtue* (1981).

21. See Gadamer (1980b) for both an account of Aristotle's notion of 'practical philosophy' and an argument for its modern revival.

22. Aristotle's fullest account of deliberation and practical reasoning is to be found in the chapter on 'Practical wisdom and excellence in deliberation' in the *Nichomachean Ethics* (Book VI: Ch. 9).

23. As Aristotle puts it, 'He who deliberates well, deliberates correctly' (NE 1142b).

24. For a detailed exposition of Aristotle's notion of judgement see Beiner (1983) Chapters 4 and 5.

25. Peters (1966, 1977).

26. Woods and Dray (1973).

27. See in particular 'Education and the educated man' in Peters (1977).
28. Ball (1977), Rorty (1979), Gadamer (1980a, 1981), MacIntyre (1981) and Bernstein (1983).
29. Schwab (1969), Van Manen (1977), Reid (1978), Elliott (1980, 1985), Langford (1985) and Carr and Kemmis (1986).
30. Something like this interpretation of Peters' philosophy is developed with considerable conviction by Elliott (1986). See also Carr (1986).

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(ii) WHAT IS AN EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE? A REPLY TO WILFRED CARR

Ruth Jonathan

This paper is of considerable interest and importance, I believe, and requires a response which does not aim to repudiate its general approach, or to criticise the fine detail of the argument, but which seeks to open up that general approach to further development, and to ask for clarification concerning the methodological status of the argument. It is not possible in the space of a short reponse to do justice to the wealth of interconnected ideas which this subtle and complex paper contains, so this reply will focus on two of its aspects only: the paper's recommendations concerning how we ought to conceptualise 'an educational practice', and the methodology which gives rise to these recommendations.

Although the recommendations which arise from the argument – and which also seem to propel it invisibly – have considerable appeal, it is unclear what is claimed about the status of those recommendations, so that the reader does not know whether the preferred methodology here is intended to provide the general thesis with essential justification or simply with additional plausibility. If the former, then the soundness of the methodology is crucial; if the latter, methodological flaws are incidental and do not detract from the interest of the overall perspective. Since, as already indicated, I believe both that the overall perspective adopted is fruitful and persuasive, and that the methodology of the paper is mistaken, it will be implicit in this response that a methodological critique such as follows below involves no rejection of the general thesis, but rather leaves it requiring a different kind of justification.

The fruitful position in which Wilfred Carr's paper ends might be defended and elaborated by recourse to moral and political argument and by appeals concerning the consequences of basing decisions and actions on that chosen perspective rather than on another. But Carr does not *start* from this position and defend it in those sorts of terms: he claims to have been propelled there by the force of an historically informed analysis of concepts, and it is this procedure which leaves me confused and sceptical. This response

will therefore briefly state what I take to be the general recommendations of Wilfred Carr's paper; it will then trace the route by which he seems to arrive at them, before attempting to show why this method of arriving at such recommendations seems insufficient for their justification, leaving them in need of a substantive defence, which, I believe, could well be mounted by other means. Whilst the route followed to this paper's conclusions is interesting and enlightening, and whilst many of its insights lend persuasive force to the recommendations embedded in the argument, a full justification for these recommendations would have to be sought elsewhere, since the analysis does not *entail* them.

The force of Carr's paper, then, is to recommend that we conceptualise the practice of education as a morally committed activity of the sort where means are constitutive of, rather than instrumental to, ends. These ends, in turn, cannot be specified theoretically, either prior to or separately from the practice that they permeate and inform; nor can they stand immune from criticism and revision. Although the ends of educational practice are the product of a tradition of reflection and action which constitutes the practical knowledge informing the activity of education, practitioners should employ this practical knowledge in concrete social situations in order to reflect on, criticise and further modify and extend the tradition they inherit. I take this to be a set of beliefs about what *ought* to happen in the practice of education, rather than claims about what happens contingently, or about what necessarily must occur. These recommendations about how we might most fruitfully conceptualise the practice of education, in order to divide those practices which are 'educational' in some normative sense from those which do not merit the honorific title, imply further choices concerning the relationship of theory to practice, the nature of educational theory, and the relation of philosophy of education to educational practice, all of which are touched on in the paper.

In each of these areas the perspective advocated is persuasive. Thus, theory and practice are inextricably linked, with the implicit assumptions of each serving to delimit the legitimate parameters of the other. Educational theory, in turn, is not a matter of establishing the most effective techniques to achieve pre-specified or pre-specifiable objectives; it is rather a process of reflective critique of educational practice and circumstance, grounded in moral and social theory. And philosophy of education is not simply a matter of collecting insights and methodologies from the discipline of philosophy and then applying these to educational concerns; it is also a matter of reflexively allowing the problems and contradictions of educational practice to prompt or correct philosophical insights and to modify methodology. A great strength of the approach reflected in Carr's paper is that, as well as being individually persuasive and fruitful, each of these perspectives is consistent with the others, and coheres with the preferred conceptualisation of the practice of education which the paper advances.

This same preferred conceptualisation also reflects particular perspectives on the relation of thought to action, of the individual to society, and of reflective critique to social change, which Carr has explored elsewhere, though not in this paper. All of these

perspectives embody dialectical relations, not in the determinist, linear, Marxist sense of dialectic, but in the open-ended spiral sense of the Frankfurt School, and of Hans-Georg Gadamer also. Many of these ideas are persuasive, especially in providing a way out of the positivist *cul-de-sac* without falling into the traps of interpretative explanation and relativist epistemology, which simply stand positivism on its head. A conception of the practice of education such as is advocated in Carr's paper would be compatible with, and is perhaps indeed implied by, the insights of critical theory. Those, therefore, who are persuaded by much of critical theory will find that this compatibility lends further legitimacy to a conception of the practice of education which they endorse for its likely consequences in individual and social terms.

However, Wilfred Carr has not chosen to lay out and defend a socio-philosophical theory, and then to argue from there to a particular conception of educational practice. Indeed, he could not, for one of his basic premises is that practice cannot be specified by theory, since the two are interdependent. However, it is by no means evident that in accepting this interdependence we must thereby be debarred from arguing in the way which Carr is at pains to avoid. If a philosophical approach encompasses the insights of preceding competing theories whilst avoiding their alternative mistakes and inconsistencies, it seems *prima facie* fruitful. If it also implies conceptions of social practices whose desirability can be justified by moral and social argument and by consideration of their consequences, and if, moreover, those conceptions of social practice give rise to understandings about, say, individuals and society, or thought and action, which are fruitful improvements on competing understandings, then both the philosophical meta-theory and the preferred conceptions of social practices are thereby strengthened. That theory and practice stand in a dialectical relation to each other for the purposes of the critique and development of both does not entail that they cannot be theoretically disentangled for the purpose of exploring that dialectical relation. To pursue the dialectic thus is surely not to fall back into the mistake which Carr is careful to avoid, namely that of deriving practice from theory on the assumption that the two are discrete.

However, for whatever reasons, Carr chooses in his paper to advance his conception of an educational practice by a process of analysis, not of theory or of practice, or of their interdependence, but of a 'historically sensitive' *concept* of practice. This is where his methodology seems dubious, and on two counts. First, it is far from clear just what is being analysed. The analysis begins as an analysis of the concept of *an educational practice.* In the historical section, which turns to the Aristotelian notion of *praxis,* it seems to become an analysis of the concept of *practice itself.* Then in the subsequent section it seems to become, not an analysis, but a disguised elaboration, of a preferred concept of *education.* Secondly, it is not evident either how the central concept here is in fact being analysed, or on what grounds the chosen procedure is to be justified.

Though I would agree that the asocial and ahistorical analysis of concepts eliminates confusion and promotes clarity only within a conceptual framework or within an ideology which is thereby made immune to revision, the corrective to this must then be to include

the social and temporal locatedness of the concept in the analysis, in order to temper the prescriptive implications of analysis with social argument or, alternatively, to eschew analysis altogether. The corrective cannot be to reach for another concept which is itself socially and historically located, even though it may be a plausible etymological ancestor to the concept at issue. In this latter procedure there is something reminiscent of the old debates about locating the ancestry of 'educate' in *educare* or *educere,* with the same problem resulting. Why is the Aristotelian notion of praxis chosen here as the root concept of which the current concept is a 'fragmented relic', in preference to some other earlier conception? This can only be because that choice accords with beliefs and commitments which the analyst holds on separate grounds, which do not *follow* from the analysis, but which determine the direction it will take.

To say this is not to dispute that it might be fruitful to rehabilitate something very close to the Aristotelian concept of *praxis,* in order to escape the instrumental/technicist thrust both of recent educational theory and research and of current conceptions of education. It is only to argue that a demonstration, such as is given in Section II, of inadequacies in the prevailing concept of an educational practice, together with an exposition of the inadequacy of any ahistorical analysis, such as is found in Section III, cannot imply *of themselves* that a particular earlier historical concept should be rehabilitated to replace the current concept. It seems that when Carr asks at the end of Section III 'Can we recover from history a core concept of practice which is more compelling for education than our own?' the operative concept in the choice of what follows in Section IV is not the previously discussed *concept of practice,* but a preferred *conception of education.*

Indeed, before the historical section, it is stated that 'What we would expect a full-length history of the concept of an educational practice to reveal are those occasions where changes to its meaning have been assisted by abstract philosophical beliefs about the nature of education itself', since 'our present concept of an educational practice relies on the educational ideas and arguments of our philosophical ancestors'. This being the case, a demand for a return to an earlier concept of educational practice can only be a plea for the re-adoption of an earlier set of commitments concerning a worthwhile education. I am not arguing against such a plea, but simply disputing that it can be advanced effectively by conceptual analysis, whether of actual usage or of historical usage. For if it is not legitimate, as Carr would no doubt argue, to derive such prescriptions from an analysis of how we – or some of us – happen to use a concept today, why should it be legitimate to derive them from an historic usage? If the analysis of present usage cannot yield prescription, on the ground that it is embedded in a form of life which cannot thereby be criticised or revised, why should we be more persuaded by the force of a concept embedded in a form of life which has 'long-since disappeared'?

This could only be because, on other grounds, we are attracted by some of the features of the earlier form of life and the approach to education it endorses, and not because the earlier concept can be shown to be the true ancestor of our current concept, which is

claimed defective by comparison. As Carr's paper clearly demonstrates, concepts of practice change because practice changes. That being so, then if what are sought are changes in practice, these changes must be argued for in terms of their effects. If these arguments prevail and practice changes, then the concept of practice will again change. It may well be useful, meanwhile, as part of this process, to look back at earlier concepts; but that is because they may or may not remind us of useful ways of thinking which we have forgotten: it is not because they are the true precursors of our own concepts, which are their fragmented relics.

Thus, with Wilfred Carr, I, too, am persuaded that we have lost a useful distinction in collapsing *praxis* and *poiesis* into our current concept of 'practice', eliding the distinction between 'knowing how' and 'knowing why' – to the inevitable detriment of 'knowing why' in an era obsessed with technique. But this elision does not result from an historic conceptual mistake: it is the result of a series of choices which have given supremacy to 'knowing how' and which have thus obliterated the distinction. The upshot for education, if we choose to use Aristotelian terms, is that much of the time this practice is conceived not as a type of *praxis,* or even as a mixture of *praxis* and *poiesis,* but as pure *poiesis,* giving rise to practice which is instrumental, theory that is technical and philosophy that is debarred from prescription. If we wish to correct or reverse these emphases, then we must argue in terms of the procedures implicit in competing perspectives and in terms of the consequences implied by them. Conceptual revision by *fiat* will not do the job, though conceptual change would follow from the task's successful execution.

I have interpreted this very interesting and complex paper as a series of pleas: for educational reform, away from today's technicist/instrumental trend; for the emancipation of educational theory from the positivist fact/value dichotomy through a dialectical approach grounded in critical theory; and for the revitalisation of philosophy of education by grounding this more in moral and social theory and less in epistemology. All of these pleas seem worth endorsing, but I remain unpersuaded that the historical analysis of concepts is the best way to advance them.

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(iii) PRACTICE, PHILOSOPHY AND HISTORY: CARR *vs* JONATHAN

David E. Cooper

The issue which divides Wilfred Carr and Ruth Jonathan goes well beyond the official topic of their symposium – the concept of educational practice. Illuminating as Carr's descriptions of our present concept and of an older Aristotelian concept are, Jonathan is right to discern the really controversial element in an aspect of his methodology. This is his insistence that our current talk of practice can only be understood and evaluated via reflection on an earlier concept of which ours is a 'fragmented relic'. Carr, it is clear, intends his complaint against 'ahistorical' philosophical analysis to apply generally.

There is no need to dwell on the importance of the issue – which is nothing less than that of the proper conduct of philosophy. But it is worth remarking, perhaps, on the rather special importance this has for the philosophy of education. More obviously than concepts like *cause* or *validity,* those studied by philosophers of education – *teaching, discipline,* etc. – are embedded in social practices and institutions. These have histories, and so therefore do the embedded concepts. So the question arises, more urgently than in some other areas of philosophy, as to the relationship between the analysis and history of such concepts. If Carr is right, the first requires the second. One hears references these days to the search for a new 'paradigm' in the philosophy of education. I am not sure if the direction Carr urges us to take amounts to that, but it is clear that the reconstruction of conceptual histories, embarked upon in the belief that these will yield understanding and evaluation of current thought, would keep many philosophers of education busy for many years to come.

The difficulty in assessing, or even stating clearly, what is at issue between Carr and Jonathan is commensurate with the issue's importance. It is apparent, for instance, that it carries in its train questions about the validity of such traditional dichotomies as meaning *vs* fact, and fact *vs* value. Let me mention a couple of less obvious reasons for the difficulty of the issue. First, it is one which has only recently surfaced in Anglo-Saxon philosophy:

so that we do not as yet have a seasoned literature to guide us. With only a few exceptions,[1] the received view until recently was that examination of a concept's history could have no relevance to its analysis or critique. Analysis as reduction of a concept to its atomic parts; analysis as displaying a concept's conditions for true application; analysis as description of the ordinary usage of a term. These have been the favoured notions of conceptual analysis this century, and none of them grants any relevance to a concept's history. It is only in the last decade, roughly – in the writings, especially of MacIntyre, Rorty, and Charles Taylor – that this 'ahistorical' orthodoxy has been seriously questioned. A decade is a very short period in philosophy.

Secondly, a peculiarly troublesome feature of the issue as it arises in the papers by Carr and Jonathan is its 'self-referential' or 'reflexive' character. They are concerned with the philosophical methodology of examining the concept of practice. But this methodology is itself a practice – or, at any rate, gives rise to one. Hence there is always the danger that what is said about practice is liable to boomerang on to the very methodological practice which is manifested in the saying of it. Indeed, I shall suggest at the end that Ruth Jonathan is in the paradoxical position of saying things about practice which are incompatible with her own practice.

I remarked, above, that the historical approach urged by Carr is a relative novelty in Anglo-Saxon philosophy. This qualification is important, for once we cross the channel, novelty passes into tradition. In the French and German traditions, it is the idea that conceptual understanding could be *ahistorical* which would seem novel. These traditions go back at least to Hegel, for whom, as Taylor puts it, 'philosophy and the history of philosophy are one'.[2] According to Hegel, any concept liable to be of philosophical interest is an integral part of man's rational apparatus: but this apparatus – reason – is the outcome of dialectical history. So to understand a concept, to appreciate its necessary place in our reason, is to grasp how it has at once integrated, yet gone beyond – *aufgehoben* – its earlier, less complete stages.

A more jaundiced tradition is the one initiated by Nietzsche and continued, most recently by Michel Foucault – the tradition of 'genealogy'. Here the guiding thought is that understanding of crucial concepts requires appreciation of the strategic uses to which they are put, in particular of the powers they confer on those who wield them. But this, in turn, requires examination of those earlier days when the concepts, in their current deployment, were first being forged in response to the emerging needs and ambitions that older concepts could no longer serve. The contemporary notion of sexuality – as a distinct and deeply significant element in human nature – is only to be understood, argues Foucault, in terms of its nineteenth century emergence, by way of response to primarily bureaucratic needs, from an earlier notion of sex as just one, not especially privileged, aspect of bodily pleasure.[3]

The grandest, if most opaque, effort in our century to mate conceptual and historical understanding is Heidegger's. And it is this attempt, filtered through the work of Heidegger's great pupil, Gadamer, which is most reflected in Carr's paper. What Carr emphasises – the

'technological' corruption of an earlier, healthier concept of practice – is but one instance of what, for Heidegger, is a wholly general phenomenon: the progressive transmutation by 'technological' man of concepts which once incorporated a truer perception of Being. Hence his many, sometimes bizarre, excursions into etymology, designed to remind us of conceptual connections that we have suppressed. For example: our 'calculative' notion of thinking is allegedly the heir of an earlier one in which thinking (*denken*) is intimately tied to thanking (*danken*) – in which thinking is standing in grateful receipt of 'the call of Being'.[4]

I have cited these 'Continental' traditions to counteract the impression – encouraged perhaps by Jonathan's paper – that the appeal to conceptual histories is philosophically freak. Still, it is not clear that these citations take us far in deciding on the validity of such an appeal. For, grand and intriguing as some of the Hegelian, Nietzschean, or Heideggerian investigations may be, the general justifications offered by those philosophers for their historical appeals are too contentious, and too far apart from one another, to settle matters. Not everyone, that is, will concur in viewing conceptual analysis as a replication of dialectical, historical process; or in viewing concepts as weapons in a power-game; or in seeing intellectual history as the corrupt story of a 'fall' from pristine beginnings. So let us return to the rather less heady terms of the Carr–Jonathan debate.

On what grounds can reference to a concept's ancestry be of more than antiquarian interest and be of *critical* relevance? Jonathan's claim, I think, is that the ground can only be either 'archaic' or merely heuristic. Either one is criticising the current concept from the standpoint of the old out of archaic attachment to the past. Or it is simply that one finds it useful, in assessing a current concept, to set it beside earlier ones for purposes of comparison. In her view, it is only this heuristic ground which has any legitimacy. 'If the analysis of present usage cannot yield prescription,' she asks, 'why should we be more persuaded by the force of a concept embedded in a form of life which has "long-since disappeared"?' On the other hand 'it may well be useful meanwhile . . . to look back at earlier concepts . . . because they may or may not remind us of useful ways of thinking which we have forgotten'.[5] Of course, if this 'looking back' is of merely heuristic value, then it is inessential. The criticism of our current concept is one we *could* make even if we did not set it beside an earlier one, and even if there had not been an earlier one at all. The arguments for preferring an Aristotelian account of practice to our own would exist even if the former were one we were just inventing. Its age and pedigree are neither here nor there when it comes to the real *pragmatic* business of assessing our concept.

Jonathan's criticism of Carr is that, since he *sounds* as if he is adopting the 'archaic' line and preferring the old for its own sake, then, taken at his word, his position is hopeless. If he is not adopting this line and wishes merely to emphasise the heuristic value of history, then his way of putting things is not only misleading, for some of his claims – in particular the claim that 'it is *only* by first appreciating' the distance between a current and older concept of practice that we can 'critically assess' the first[6] – will be definitely false. Employment of a merely heuristic device cannot be the *only* means of criticism.

Let us concede that 'archaism' is a non-starter. It is only if we accepted some standing background presumption – like Heidegger's perhaps – to the effect that everything is always getting worse, that we could automatically prefer the old to the new. But does it follow that appeals to conceptual ancestry can only be of merely heuristic value? My own view is that such a description, if not actually incorrect, is extremely unhappy. The importance of such appeals is far too great for us to rest content with the deflating idea that they are useful, simply, for purposes of comparison. I do not intend to get bogged down in the question of whether such a description is mistaken or only misleading. The answer to that question will depend, *inter alia,* on what one thinks is *essential* to the understanding and assessment of concepts: that is, on what one thinks the proper conduct of philosophy is. This is a question to whose resolution one might hope discussions like the present one to contribute, and not one whose outcome should be presupposed from the start.

I offer four considerations in support of my claim that the 'merely heuristic' description of appeals to conceptual ancestry is misleading/mistaken. These considerations are of a general kind and I shall not try to establish, though I will be suggesting that they are pertinent to the particular topic of the nature of practices.

1. The 'merely heuristic' description suggests that the sole point in focusing on an ancestral concept is for the sake of comparing it with its heir, our current concept. But unless our interests are purely taxonomic, our motive in making such a comparison is likely to be the sense that there is something amiss with our current concept. Now, how have we come to sense this? In many cases, surely, as a *result* of reflection on happier conceptual times. Dissatisfaction with current vocabulary, as with the cheap wines one is used to, may only emerge – or, at any rate, become urgent – through acquaintance with what is better. Until we read Foucault on sexuality, say, or Heidegger on truth, or Gadamer and Carr on practice, we may have little or no sense of what is questionable in currently received concepts. It is important, moreover, that the alternative concepts be ones which people have actually exercised – for it is no critique of our own if these alternatives could only be operative in Utopian conditions. This leads to my next consideration.

2. Taylor remarks on the resilience to ordinary criticism of various, in his opinion, bad theories and 'pictures'. (His own example is the 'epistemological model', according to which thought and language 'represent' external, independent reality.) The reason is that such pictures have become second nature, have acquired an aura of necessity and inevitability which negative criticism is incapable, in practice, of dissolving. 'What we need to do', he writes,

   is to get over the presumption of the unique conceivability of the . . . picture[s] to understand how they came to embed a certain view of things . . . . In order to undo the forgetting, we have to articulate for ourselves how it happened . . . [how] a picture slid from the status of

> discovery to that of inarticulate assumption . . . . Freeing ourselves
> from the presumption of uniqueness requires uncovering the origins.
> That is why philosophy is inescapably historical.[7]

If this is right, the role of some conceptual histories is deeper than any 'merely heuristic' one. For the point is not to *compare* our concept with another, but to chart how we came by it. And the most effective way to do this is to recall a situation when we spoke and thought differently, and from which our current ways, through various contingencies, emerged. (It is no accident, as the great Czech novelist Milan Kundera points out, that totalitarian regimes, with their need to *exclude* alternative ideologies, first devote their energies to the orchestration of an 'organised forgetting'.[8]) Carr's example of educational practice seems to me to lend itself nicely to Taylor's thesis. Nobody at present working in British universities can fail to note how inevitable, how much of an 'inarticulate assumption', the technicistic, means–end picture of educational practice appears to those responsible for its administration – unless, of course, he is one of those responsible for this administration.

3.   My third consideration is also lifted from Taylor. It is plausible to suppose the true meaning of a concept resides primarily in the practices which are informed by it. Any articulation of the concept can therefore fail to capture its meaning, and in the case of important social concepts our expectation should perhaps be that current articulations *do* fail to capture them fully. This is because, especially at our late stage of history, these practices will have been partially shaped by earlier articulations which current ones are liable to 'suppress'. (Taylor cites the way, as he sees it, in which current liberal (Rawls, Nozick *et al.*) accounts of society have 'suppressed' the 'civic human- ist' model – one which, nevertheless, still exerts its influence, as can be seen by, for instance, our sense of the *dignity* of freedom and citizenship.) It is crucial, here, that the articulations we invoke to correct the one-sidedness of a current one be those which people have actually, historically, produced. For a start, it is unlikely that, from our contemporary armchairs, we can dream up a model which, though fitting aspects of our practice, has never been operative. For, after all, the obvious reason that a model (partially) fits the practice is that it has actually informed it. Second – my point, this, rather than Taylor's – why would an articulation that is not an actual ancestor of our current one count as being an articulation of the same concept? Why, for instance, would a model of freedom significantly different from the latest even constitute an account of *freedom* unless there were a traceable ancestry? Just as some prehistoric creature only counts as *man* because of a presumed causal chain linking it to us, so concepts can depend for their identity on genealogical ties. (Ruth Jonathan, inciden- tally, does not take this point sufficiently seriously. She says that she would like us to replace our present notion of educational practice by Carr's preferred one. But since she denies the relevance of that concept's historical pedigree, it is not obvious why, for

her, it must count as a con

cept of *practice* at all.)

This latest consideration, too, has application to the particular example of educational practice, it seems to me. Surely there *are* aspects of that practice not properly captured by the means–end model – for example, the great reluctance many feel towards adopting 'artificial' means ('learning at a distance', perhaps) to pre-established educational goals. *Prima facie,* this suggests that the conduct of educational practice is still informed by an earlier articulation which is 'suppressed' by the currently dominant model.

4. Whatever one's opinion of global theories of conceptual atrophy, like Heidegger's, it is certainly the case that there are some concepts, or vocabularies, which are not intelligible except as degenerate heirs of earlier ones. An excellent example given by MacIntyre is *taboo.*[9] The natives whom sailors quizzed as to this term's meaning were, it seems, unable to provide it. The term continued to be applied to what was generally forbidden, but the rationale for such proscriptions had been forgotten. The resultant application and force of the term could not be understood unless recognised as relics of a concept that once incorporated a rationale for its employment. Something akin to this point is being made by Carr *vis-à-vis* the vocabulary of practice. It is not simply that our talk is different from Aristotle's, but that ours is only intelligible as a relic of the latter. How, though, do we tell when a vocabulary is degenerate? A good sign, as MacIntyre emphasises, is lack of consensus on how to settle disputes over its application. For things cannot always have been that way, since then the vocabulary could never have secured a place in the language. And this too is, I think, Carr's point. Competing claims about the nature of practice, especially its relation to theory, abound: yet we seem to possess no inkling of how to adjudicate those claims. (Carr sometimes refers to '*the* current *concept* of practice', but this is unfortunate, for his point is better made by saying that, nowadays, there is no such thing as the concept of practice, but only an incommensurable variety of *talk* about practice.) Such anarchy cannot always have reigned. Moreover, we can partly explain the contemporary anarchy by viewing the competing claims as heirs, or bastards, of elements once fused in a genuinely coherent concept.

I do not know if Carr is right on this point: or, more generally, if he can legitimately deploy the other considerations I advanced in support of his treatment of the notion of practice. But I suggest he may well be right and, more crucially, that *if* he is right then his appeal to an earlier concept has a role much deeper than the redundant, 'merely heuristic' one granted by Jonathan. We are not simply comparing our talk with an earlier concept if, *inter alia,* this earlier one inspires our worries about the former: if it still informs aspects of our practices which our

current articulations fail to capture; and if recollection of it is required
to render intelligible aspects of our current talk.

At the beginning of this paper, I mentioned the peculiar 'reflexive' problem which
threatens when discussing the nature of philosophical methodology in connection with
the notion of practice. This is because the conduct of philosophy is itself a practice, or
set of practices. Ruth Jonathan, I suggest, works herself into what may be a paradoxical
position here. On the one hand, she is thoroughly sympathetic to Carr's desire to
replace our current notion of practice by a broadly Aristotelian one: on the other she
rejects his historical style of arguing for this. 'These changes', she says, 'must be argued
for in terms of their *effects* . . . we must argue in terms of the procedures implicit in
competing perspectives and in terms of the *consequences* implied by them.'[10] But this
pragmatism is an instance of that very kind of practice which Carr, and Jonathan herself,
wish to wean us away from. To put it differently, anyone attracted by Carr's 'pleas' is
surely going to be suspicious of any philosophical practice which places sovereign
weight, in critical assessment, on the effects, consequences, and pragmatic success of
adopting this or that concept. I am not certain if there is genuine paradox here or not.
That is just further testimony to the opacity and complexity of the issues which Carr's
and Jonathan's interesting symposium concerns.

Notes

1. One exception was J.L. Austin. See especially his 'A plea for excuses', *Philosophical
    Papers* (Oxford, 1962), where he writes, for instance, 'a word never – well, hardly ever –
    shakes off its etymology and its formation. In spite of all changes in and extensions of
    and additions to its meanings, and indeed rather pervading and governing these, there will
    still persist the old idea' (p. 149).
2. Philosophy and its history, in: Rorty, Schneewind and Skinner (eds) (1984) *Philosophy in
    History: Essays in the Historiography of Philosophy* (Cambridge) p. 17.
3. *The History of Sexuality,* Vol. 1 (London, Penguin, 1978).
4. *Was heisst denken* (Niemayer, 1954).
5. Reply to Wilfred Carr's paper 'What is an educational practice?' (reprinted in this volume,
    Paper 9(ii)).
6. 'What is an educational practice?' (reprinted in this volume, Paper 9(i)).
7. *Op. cit.,* p. 21.
8. *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* (London, Penguin, 1980) p. 159.
9. *After Virtue* (London, Duckworth) p. 105.
10. *Op. cit.* (my italics).

10

PERSPECTIVES ON
PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

Jonas F. Soltis

One of the most useful functions of philosophy is its provision of perspective. In a busy, complex and demanding world, we seldom have time to step back to seek a view of things that provides a comprehensive picture. In this essay, I would like to philosophize about the idea of philosophy of education *in general*; not about some particular philosophy or about the range of philosophical alternatives we have in educating. The kind of perspective I seek to provide is both conceptual and normative. Conceptually, I will explore a defensible description of what philosophy of education is. Normatively, I will be recommending how educators should view philosophy of education for maximum utility and how professional philosophers of education should act *as* professionals.

Elsewhere,[1] I have tried to provide a comprehensive view for laypersons and educators alike of the form that contemporary philosophy of education takes by sketching it in three dimensions: the personal, the public, and the professional.[2] In this essay, I would like to explore in more depth the ideas of professional and public philosophy of education. But first, some background is needed. In the works cited below, I was concerned primarily with the mismatch between expectation and actual experience that the non-philosopher often felt when coming into contact with the contemporary work of professional philosophers of education. I wanted to provide a way for the non-philosopher to see what the philosopher was about and a way for philosophers to come to appreciate the genuine and legitimate needs expressed by those not in the guild.

The best entry point for non-philosophers into this problem seemed to me to be to take the very basic and pervasive idea of having a personal philosophy of life and liken it to having a philosophy of education, a set of personal beliefs about what is good, right, and worthwhile to do in education. The point of being philosophical about education in this way, I argued, was for the individual to achieve a satisfying sense of personal meaning, purpose, and commitment to guide his or her activities as an educator. This, I further noted, was essential to being a thoughtful self-directed educator rather than a

mindless cog in a bureaucratic machine. It seemed to me that it was this personal dimension of philosophy of education that most laypersons expected philosophers of education to wrestle with and write about. Yet few practising philosophers of education seem to write or speak in this personal way about educating.[3] Some philosophers of education do consider it their obligation to help prospective educators find and form up their own personal philosophies of education, but many others consider that pedagogical function to be an outmoded relic left over from the 'schools of philosophy' approach that was dominant in philosophy of education at mid-century. In any case, my earlier point was that while having a personal philosophy of education is very important to mindful and meaningful educational activities, upon inspection we find that contemporary philosophers of education seldom publicly engage in that form of philosophizing and usually aim at other things in their teaching and writing. So we must look to the public dimension.

The main difference between viewing philosophy of education along the personal dimension of guiding one's own individual practice and viewing it in its public dimension is that the latter is aimed at guiding and directing the practice of the many. Any educational proposal meant for others to follow or any normative prescription or critique that is intended to alter present educational practice exists in the public dimension.[4] From Plato to Dewey, philosophers have operated along this dimension. In fact, anyone can be philosophical about education in this public way and many are, be they journalists, politicians, academics, intellectuals, educators or philosophers. Public philosophy of education is everybody's business and ought to be. The point of being philosophical about education in the public dimension is to articulate public aspirations and educational values, give sense and purpose to the cooperative public enterprise of education, and provide the opportunity for thoughtful participation in the direction of education by all who care seriously about it.

More frequently than not, one aspect of this dimension of philosophy of education takes precedence over the personal and professional in the minds of many and philosophers of education are expected to provide coherent and comprehensive statements of *a* public philosophy of education. More often than not, however, contemporary philosophical work does not meet this public expectation. Of course, professional twentieth-century philosophers like Dewey, Kilpatrick, and Brameld have written primarily along this seam of the public dimension. But many contemporary philosophers of education do not mine that particular seam at all.

Moreover, it seems of late that more non-philosophers have been publicly recognized as being philosophical about education in their work and writings than have been professional philosophers, e.g., Neill, *Summerhill*; Skinner, *Walden Two*; Cremin, *Public Education*; Goodman, *Growing Up Absurd*; Kozol, *Death at an Early Age*; Illich, *Deschooling Society*; Kohlberg, 'Stages of Moral Development as a Basis for Moral Education,' *et al.* Thus there is a lively public domain of educational proposals, debates, critiques, programmes and policymaking that many labour in very seriously and

thoughtfully. And as a human and social activity, it is philosophical in the deepest sense of that term, even though all who engage in it are not professional philosophers and not all professional philosophers engage in educational thinking in this programmatic way. What then sets apart the professional dimension of philosophy of education from the public and how are they related? This is the central topic I will explore in the remainder of this essay.

Before doing this, however, a caveat is in order. D.C. Phillips, in his 'Philosophy of Education' entry in the *International Encyclopedia of Education* (1985), notes that it could be argued that 'quirks of academic politics and institutionalization' account for the fact that we find only a small group of 'professional' philosophers of education in colleges and universities mainly, in the English-speaking world, and, internationally speaking, they constitute only a very narrow segment of a larger field. He believes that it is better to view the field of philosphy of education from a broader perspective to include European, African and Asian counterparts not necessarily called 'philosophers of education' at their institutions. He also claims that non-professional philosophers like Skinner and Kohlberg are actually doing philosophy of education in its technical sense and so should be included in any conception of philosophy of education. So also should theorists from other fields like Piaget, Vygotsky, and Chomsky, whose work has great relevance to philosophy of education. While Phillips and I offer different frameworks, we have no serious disagreements; all of these 'philosophers of education' need to be accommodated somehow. We cut up the pie differently, but both of us see the need for a broader, more comprehensive view of philosophy of education that can help the non-philosopher see the many ways philosophy relates to things educational. Moreover, Phillips is correct. The number of those who actually call themselves 'philosophers of education' is small and their institutionalization is recent and geographically they are narrowly distributed. But 'professional philosophers of education' do exist and I believe as one of their number that we need to help others to view us more accurately and understand our potential reciprocal relationships better. And it is this 'professional' problem of mismatch of expectations with which much of my recent work has been concerned.

I still believe that my initial description of the professional dimension of philosophy of education was essentially accurate. Basically, I argued that while professional philosophy of education includes both the personal and public dimensions, it adds a dimension of its own. The professional dimension goes beyond these predominantly programmatic ways of philosophically treating education and adds the approach and use of the technical tools of the professional philosopher to ways of dealing with conceptual and normative issues relevant to education. When philosophers perform as professionals, there is less proposing and more analyzing, reflecting, evaluating, and seeking of a clearer understanding of educational matters. There is more emphasis on ascertaining the logical soundness of arguments, explicating the meaning of ideas, justifying value claims, constructing reasonable arguments and providing ways to think about educational tasks

and problems rather than ways to do or solve them. When engaged in this sort of philosophizing, a philosopher of education is more intent on providing illumination, understanding, and perspective for educators *to think with,* than on providing programmes and policies for educators *to act on.*

The point of being philosophical in this way is to make the educational enterprise as rationally self-reflective as possible by providing philosophically rigorous examinations, critiques, justifications, analyses and syntheses of aspects of the educators' conceptual and normative domain. The ability of professional philosophers of education to do this well is directly dependent upon their rigorous training in and mastery of philosophical skills and literature. They are philosophical scholar–teachers who do technical philosophical work demanding rigour, precision, and adherence to their own professional canons of scholarship just as sociologists, historians, psychologists, and other academics do in their writing and teaching.

Of course, there is overlap in the three-dimensional personal, public, and professional space in which the professional philosopher operates. But there also is a disciplined and specialized way that professional philosophers approach and deal with educationally relevant matters that sets it apart from similar efforts by the non-specialists, who also can occupy a part of the same space. The crucial question to ask then is how could and how should those who occupy parts of the same space relate to one another? Is the professional philospher of education obligated to reach audiences beyond fellow philosophers? I believe so. Personally, I think that we philosophers of education have a moral obligation to use our special skills in the public sphere, much as the medical practitioner is duty bound to aid the sick wherever found. But to meet such obligations we need to be clearer about the idea of the public dimension of philosophy of education and about the audiences we might address and the things we might do.[5]

There are three senses of *public* philosophy of education that need to be distinguished and possible modes of operation in them by professional philosophers sketched. The first is a 'going public' sense in which any proposal or critique offered in the hope of having some effect on education is all that is meant. Obviously, there are a number of ways individual philosophers or groups may try to put a philosophical point, argument or message before a 'public' and many possible degrees of 'going public'. It can range from the very minimal sense of presenting or publishing a scholarly paper to be heard or read by a very small audience to a major effort through television, newspapers, or other mass media to reach the public at large. An example of this last sort would be Matthew Lipman's efforts to promote his school programme called 'Philosophy for Children'.

There is also a second 'public policy' sense of philosophy of education in which explicit educational policies are shaped and adapted or critiqued and rejected. Here, cooperative work by philosophers and others on explcit policies emanating from official commissions, committees, agencies, etc. provide guidelines, directives, and programmes to accomplish certain goals. For example, Head Start, performance-based teacher education, busing, and competency testing are contemporary American public policies

that are laced with basic philosophical assumptions or justifications. These are not only public in the sense of making a public philosophical offering, but also public in the sense of being 'officially' public, authorized or legitimated by some socially sanctioned institutional devices. Philosophers can and do serve as co-workers on this policy-making level, but we all know that more of them could and should do so. They need to put themselves forward in this capacity more vigorously and the public needs to more clearly see what they distinctively have to offer as professionals with special skills. Mismatched expectations do not help here at all.

Finally, there is the third kind of 'public ideology' sense of what we all believe deep down about education and schooling for life in our society. This includes both conscious and unconscious educational values and purposes like our own conscious commitment in America to using schooling to provide for individual opportunity and social mobility and our unconscious need expressed in the school's organizational structure to prepare people for the working conditions that exist in our technological, bureaucratic, capitalist society. The philosopher can unearth, examine, critique or attempt to justify our public ideological Commitments, be they conscious or unconscious or like Dewey (and probably what is most expected by the public and least possible for each and every professional philosopher to do) articulate a new form of public ideology.

This expanded view of the public dimension of philosophy of education provides but a sketchy map of the multiple avenues open to travel for a visible group of professional scholars who have been accused in recent years of only writing and talking to and for themselves. In describing this public dimension, however, I am not calling for the abandonment of the basic allegiance of philosophers of education to their own scholarly community. Active life and interaction with each other nurtures and sustains growth as professional philosophers. And I also believe that philosophers of education need the succour of the mother discipline of philosophy. But there are other professional colleagues important to the development of the philosopher of education. We need substantive contact with educational researchers, professional educators of educators and practitioners to keep our minds open to potentially relevant philosophical problems, issues, or ideas. In fact, relevance of what we do to education must be the *sine qua non* of our professional commitment. It cannot be otherwise if we are honestly to call ourselves philosophers of education.

So, while our first and primary audience is our fellow philosophers, we also have fellow educators and the public at large as two other major potential audiences. To reach them effectively, I believe we need to educate their expectations so that they can match the professional philosophers' specialized skills and expertise with their need to mainain an educational system that fulfills desirable purposes. We also need to be able to speak in the public idiom without sacrificing philosophical rigour.

The expanded view of the public dimension offered above suggests numerous ways for professional philosophers of education to try to serve the public at large by 'going public' to a greater degree, by engaging in public policy making and by exploring the

public's educational ideology, but I have said little to this point about how philosophers of education might try to reach that other important audience – educators. They can roughly be divided into two groups: college, school or department of education colleagues and pre-service–in-service practitioners. In recent years a good and useful dialogue has been growing between educational researchers and philosophers of education with special expertise in the philosophy of science and of social science. This 'natural' overlap of interest should continue to be nurtured and cannot but help to bring welcome and needed philosophical perspective to the conception, methodology, and results of educational research. Colleagues in such professional fields as curriculum development, administration, and educational psychology would also seem to have a natural affinity with philosophers of education who have a special technical interest in epistemology, social philosophy and philosophical psychology. The potential for numerous points of contact between the interests and concerns of educational specialists and professional philosophers of education is great. Ways need to be found to open up useful and mutually stimulating dialogues in journals, symposia, conferences, and even informally between colleagues within institutions. The understanding of both parties cannot help but be improved.

On the pre-service level, professional philosophers of education need to close ranks and come to agree upon and provide a core of philosophical perspective on education that is judged by all to be basic and minimally essential in the pre-service education of educators. As the profession of philosophy of education has grown, so have the books, articles, texts, and approaches to teaching a basic course. It is time to regroup, to agree on a common core of essentials and let variety and special interests come after that. I believe that such a core should include a substantive treatment of contemporary philosophical perspectives on curriculum and aims, theories of teaching, conceptions of learning and human development, schooling and social reproduction, and professional ethics.[6] Of course, philosophers have more than content to offer students. They are especially good at teaching the skills of straight thinking and cultivating a respect for reasonableness, both of which are so necessary for teachers to learn and nurture in their own classrooms on every level. All these things should constitute the core aims of the basic philosophical component of pre-service teacher education.

As more and more in-service teachers and administrators are required or urged to continue their professional education, special opportunities open up for directly relevant philosophical study and reflection on what they are about as educators. Their years of experience as educators give them a solid platform from which to sift ideas and search for meaningful philosophical perspectives. The pre-service novice looks quite understandably for theory to prescribe practice, for anything that will tell the nervous beginner how to do it. Philosophy is notoriously short on practical theory. But the experienced teacher who already knows how to do it can look to philosophy for a broader perspective, a richer understanding, and a more critical view of his or her teaching and of education as a basic social institution. For the subject matter teacher, there are the various philosophies of (of science, of maths, of art, of history, of language, etc.) that can provide

an exciting philosophical perspective on his or her field. Study of this sort often serves to generate new ideas and approaches to teaching not only content but also the 'structure of the discipline'. For the experienced teacher seeking to step back and view education *writ large* as a normative social enterprise that can be criticized, altered, guided, and reconceptualized, there is the rich literature of the history of educational thought and contemporary critics and proposers of the alternative forms of education to be read, examined, and talked about in the company of like-minded professionals. And for both experienced teachers and administrators, who work and live in a real world that demands difficult decisions affecting others to be made daily, there is a need to come together under the guidance of a philosopher to explore the complexities and dilemmas of professional ethics.

The relation between public and professional philosophy of education that I have tried to sketch in this essay is a complex but not necessarily complicated one. Because it is not simple or unidimensional does not mean that it cannot be easily grasped and traversed in either direction. I hope I have provided perspective and opened up more of a possibility for a better understanding between non-philosophers and philosophers, and a better matching of expectations between the public and professional dimensions of education. There is still much work that needs to be done at their interstices. I also hope that I have convinced some of my fellow philosophers of education that to be a true professional requires some effort at operating on all of the dimensions of philosophy of education: the personal, the public, and the professional. To do less to my mind is to be less than a professional.

Notes

1. 'Philosophy of Education' entry in the *Encyclopedia of Educational Research,* fifth edition (New York: Macmillan and Free Press, 1982), Vol. 3.

2. These ideas grew out of and were developed in other of my writings. Among these are my introductory and final essays in Soltis (ed.) *Philosophy of Education since Mid-Century* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1979 and 1981); the introductory chapter of the NSSE Yearbook, Soltis (ed.) *Philosophy of Education* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1981); the articles 'Philosophy of Education for Teachers', *Journal of Education* (Nova Scotia), 7, 2, 1981: 9–11 and 'After Thoughts', *Educational Theory,* 31, 1, 1981: 91–5; and my Korean lecture, 'Recent Trends in Philosophy of Education' delivered in Seoul and Taegu in May, 1982.

3. My colleague at Teachers College, Maxine Greene, is one who does this most effectively and I really believe that her doing so partially accounts for her widespread popularity with non-philosophers. They get from her what they expect and it is delivered in a very moving, compelling, consciousness-raising, heartfelt way. Her 1981 AERA presidency attests to her outreach.

4.   In all probability even if only implicitly or tacitly, such things also have a personal dimension. It is interesting to note, however that while that may be true in their origination, a public philosophy of education can take on a reified life of its own independent of the personal commitment of the originator and can even exist with no one personally committed to it, e.g., Plato's *Republic*.

5.   I thank Brian Crittenden for reacting to a draft of my encyclopedia article and raising questions about my 'public dimension' that led me to more fully consider these topics.

6.   Teachers College Press has produced a new Foundations of Education Series called 'Thinking about Education' and I am co-author of five books in that series on these five topics with Decker Walker, Gary Fenstermacher, Denis Phillips, Walter Feinberg, and Kenneth Strike. Any number of texts could be written to help the beginner to explore these basic areas. My point here is to argue for their centrality in teacher education.

Part III

CONCEPTIONS OF EDUCATION

11

(i) THE JUSTIFICATION OF EDUCATION

R.S. Peters

Introduction

To be educated is thought by many to be a desirable condition of mind, but it obviously does not encompass all that is desirable. Uneducated people can be compassionate and courageous and there is surely some value in such mental dispositions. On the other hand educated people often lack perseverance and integrity, which are also generally thought to be valuable. So even though there may be value in being educated it must be associated with some specific types of value. What then are the values which are specific to being educated and what sort of justification call be given for them? It is to these limited questions that I propose to address myself in this article rather than to wider questions of value with which I was concerned in *Ethics and Education,* and with which, in places, I confused these limited questions – owing perhaps to certain inadequacies in the analysis of the concept of 'education' with which I was then working.

1 The values specific to education

What, then, are the values which are specific to being educated? This depends on whether 'education' is being used in a general or in a specific sense.[1] There is a general concept of 'education' which covers almost any process of learning, rearing, or bringing up. Nowadays, when we speak of education in this general way, we usually mean going to school, to an institution devoted to learning. In this sense of 'education' almost any quality of mind can be deemed a product of it – compassion and perseverance included. To say that such qualitites of mind are the product of education is to say that they are learned. Education, in this sense, can be accorded any kind of instrumental value and so is not of any significance for its valuative suggestions.

Of more relevance is the specific concept of 'education' which emerged in the nineteenth century as a contrast to training. Various processes of learning come to be termed 'educative' because they contribute to the development of an educated man or woman. This was an ideal which emerged in opposition both to narrow specialization and to the increasingly instrumental view of knowledge associated with the development of technology. It was, of course, as old as the Greeks, though it was not previously picked out by the concept of an 'educated man'. Thus (1) the educated man is not one who merely possesses specialized skills. He may possess such specific know-how but he certainly also possesses a considerable body of knowledge together with understanding. He has a developed capacity to reason, to justify his beliefs and conduct. He knows the reason why of things as well as that certain things are the case. This is not a matter of just being knowledgeable; for the understanding of an educated person transforms how he sees things. It makes a difference to the level of life which he enjoys; for he has a backing for his beliefs and conduct and organizes his experience in terms of systematic conceptual schemes. (2) There is the suggestion, too, that his understanding is not narrowly specialized. He not only has breadth of understanding but is also capable of connecting up these different ways of interpreting his experience so that he achieves some kind of cognitive perspective. This can be exhibited in two sorts of ways. Firstly, he is not just embedded in one way of reacting to what he encounters. He can, for instance, combine a knowledge of how a car works with sensitivity to its aesthetic proportions, to its history, and to its potentiality for human good and ill. He can see it as a problem for town-planners as well as a fascinating machine. Secondly, he is ready to pursue the links between the different sorts of understanding that he has developed. Any moral judgement, for instance, presupposes beliefs about people's behaviour, and many moral judgements involve assessments of the consequences of behaviour. An educated person, therefore, will not rely on crude, unsophisticated interpretations of the behaviour of others when making moral judgements; he will not neglect generalizations from the social sciences, in so far as they exist, about the probable consequences of types of behaviour. If these are at all sophisticated he will have to bring to bear some rudimentary understanding of statistics. Similarly, as a scientist he will not be oblivious to the moral presuppositions of scientific activity or of the aesthetic features of theories; neither will he be insensitive to the relevance of his findings to wider issues of belief and action.

(3) In contrast, too, the instrumentality so often associated with specialized knowledge, the educated person is one who is capable, to a certain extent, of doing and knowing things for their own sake. He can delight in what he is doing without always asking the question 'And where is this going to get me?' This applies as much to cooking as it does to chemistry. He can enjoy the company of a friend as well as a concert. And his work is not just a chore to be carried out for cash. He has a sense of standards as well as a sense of the setting of what he is doing between the past and the future. There are continuities in his life which reflect what he cares about. He takes

care because he cares.

(4) Processes of education are processes by means of which people become this way, by means of which they are gradually initiated into this form of life. They are not to be regarded strictly as means to being educated, if 'means' is taken as indicating a process which is both valuatively neutral and related to the end purely causally as taking a drug might be related to a tranquil state of mind. For these processes are processes of learning, and this always involves some kind of content to be mastered, understood, remembered. This content, whether it is a skill, an attitude, an item of knowledge, or a principle to be understood must be intimated, perhaps in embryonic form, in the learning situation. There must, therefore, be some link of a logical rather than a causal sort between the 'means' and the 'end' if it is to be a process of learning. If anyone, for instance, is to learn to think mathematically or morally, the learning situations must include some kind of experiences of a mathematical or a moral sort. Learning may be aided by the temperature of the room, by constant repetition, by smiling at the learner or rewarding him. Some of these conditions of learning may be of a causal type. But there must be some kind of logical link between the content to which the learner is introduced in the learning situation and that which is constitutive of his performance when he has learned.

Because of this logical type of relationship between means and ends in education it is not appropriate to think of the values of an educational process as contained purely in the various attainments which are constitutive of being an educated person. For in most cases the logical relationship of means to ends is such that the values of the product are embryonically present in the learning process. Suppose, for instance, that children learn to think scientifically by being set simple problems to solve in chemistry and physics. Some of the values of scientific thinking – for instance being clear and precise, looking for evidence, checking results and not cooking them – are instantiated in the learning situation.[2] This would suggest that, from the point of view of value, there is little difference between the learning situation and that of the exercise of what has been learned. This has led thinkers such as Dewey to claim that the values of living are no different from those of education. For both the learner and the liver exhibit the virutes of critical, open-ended, disciplined inquiry.

On the other hand there is the type of difference to which Aristotle drew attention in his paradox of moral education, which is really the paradox of all education. This is that in order to develop the dispositions of a just man the individual has to perform acts that are just, but the acts which contribute to the formation of the dispositions of the just man are not conceived of in the same way as the acts which finally flow from his character, once he has become just. Similarly doing science or reading poetry at school contribute to a person being educated. But later on, as an educated person, he may conceive of them very differently. He may do them because he is drawn to their underlying point or because he sees their relevance to some issue of belief or conduct. This makes the justification of values immanent in such activities very complicated.

However, nothing yet has been said about the justification of any of the values of being educated.

2 Instrumental justifications of education

The most all-pervading type of justification for anything in our type of society is to look for its use either to the community or to the individual; for basically our society is geared to consumption. Even the work of the artist, for instance, is not always valued for the excellences which are intrinsic to it. Rather it is valued because it attracts more people to a public place, because it provides a soothing or restful atmosphere for people who are exposed to it, or because of the prestige of the artist, which rubs off on to the body which commissions him. Music is piped into railway stations and air terminals to make people feel cheerful just as heat is piped through radiators to make them warm. Art and music can be thought of in this way irrespective of how the artists or musicians conceive of what they are doing. The same sort of thing can happen to education, though there are difficulties in thinking of education in this way if all its criteria are taken into account. To make this point I will consider its aspects separately.

Knowledge and understanding

It can be argued cogently that the development of knowledge, skill, and understanding is in both the community's and the individual's interest because of other types of satisfaction which it promotes, and because of distinctive evils which it mitigates. Skills are an obvious case in point. Whatever their intrinsic value as forms of excellence the learning of them is obviously necessary for the survival of a community. Many of them also provide an individual with a living and hence with food, shelter, and a range of consumer satisfactions.

A strong instrumental case can also be made for the passing on of knowledge and understanding. Knowledge, in general, is essential to the survival of a civilized community in which processes of communication are very important. For 'knowledge' implies at least (1) that what is said or thought is true and (2) that the individual has grounds for what he says or thinks. It is no accident that all civilized societies have such a concept. As far as (1) is concerned, most forms of communication would be impossible if people did not, in general, say what they thought was true. It is socially important, therefore, to have a special word to mark out communications drawing attention to what is true. (2) The evidence condition is also socially very important because of the value of reliability and predictability in social life. Most of human behaviour depends on beliefs which are expressed and transmitted by means of language. If such beliefs were entirely based on guesses, on feelings which people had in their stomachs, or on various forms of divination,

a predictable form of social life would be difficult to imagine. It is no accident, therefore, that civilized societies have the special word 'knowledge' which signals that the person who uses it has good grounds for what he says or thinks.

'Understanding' is equally important; for it suggests that a particular event can be explained in terms of a general principle or shown to fit into some kind of pattern or framework. This permits a higher degree of predictability because of the recourse to generality or to analogy. The context of predictability is thus widened. And, needless to say, the development of knowledge and understanding has an additional social benefit because it permits better control over and utilization of the natural world for human purposes, as was emphasized by thinkers such as Bacon, Hobbes, and Marx. Hence the social value of highly specialized knowledge with the development of industrialism.

The development of understanding is particularly important in a modern industrialized society, in which the skills required change rapidly. Industrialists do not demand that the schools should provide a lot of specialized technical training. They prefer to do this themselves or to arrange courses in technical colleges for their employees. If people just serve an apprenticeship in a specialized skill and if they are provided only with a body of knowledge which is necessary to the exercise of that skill under specific conditions, then they will tend to be resistant to change and will become redundant when there is no longer need for this particular skill. If, on the other hand, they have also some understanding in depth of what they are about, they will, at least, be more flexible in their approach and more ready to acquire new techniques. This applies also to social understanding, some degree of which is necessary for working with others; for, as Marx showed, changes in techniques bring with them changes in social organization. If a builder or a teacher is both limited in his understanding and rigid in his attitudes, he is not likely to be good at adapting to changes in organization brought about by changes in techniques.

Breadth of understanding

The importance of social understanding suggests an instrumental type of argument for the other aspect of being educated which is incompatible with narrow specialization, namely that of 'breadth'. But what kind of case, in terms of providing services, can be made for typists, dentists, and shop stewards being aesthetically sensitive, and alive to their historical situation and religious predicament? A case can be made for such breadth of understanding as being an important aspect of political education in a democracy along the lines argued by Patricia White.[3] It is, however, often said that such people make more efficient employees than those with a narrow training. But if this is true, which is questionable, it may not be due to the breadth of their understanding and sensitivity but to the fact that, in studying various subjects, they become practised in the generalizable techniques of filing papers and ideas, mastering and marshalling other people's arguments, of presenting alternatives clearly

and weighing them up, of writing clearly and speaking articulately, and so on. Their academic training in the administration of ideas may prepare them for being administrators.

Of course it may be argued that educated people are of benefit to the professions and to industry because the breadth of their sensitivities helps to make their institutions more humane and civilized. But this is to abandon the instrumental form of argumem in which qualities of mind are regarded purely as contributing to the efficiency of the service provided judged by some obvious criterion such as profit, number of patients cured, amount of food produced, and so on. As soon as industry or the professions come to be looked at not simply as providing profit, goods for consumption, or services to the public, but as being themselves constitutive of a desirable way of life, then the values associated with consumption begin to recede. And this introduces the third aspect of being educated.

Non-instrumental attitude

It is difficult to make explicit quite what is involved in this non-instrumental attitude. The key to it is that regard, respect, or love should be shown for the intrinsic features of activities. This can be exemplified in at least the following ways. Firstly, it involves doing things for reasons that are reasons for doing this sort of thing rather than for reasons that can be artificially tacked on to almost anything that can be done. By that I mean that most things can be done for profit, for approval, for reward, to avoid punishment, for fame, for admiration. Such reasons are essentially extrinsic, as distinct from intrinsic reasons, which are internal to the conception of the activity. If, for instance, a teacher changes his methods because his pupils seem too bored to learn, that is a reason intrinsic to the activity; for 'teaching' implies the intention to bring about learning.

Secondly, if things are done for some end which is not extrinsic in this sense, the features of the means matter. If, for instance, someone wants to get to another town or country and is absolutely indifferent to the merits of different ways of travelling, save in so far as he arrives quickly at his destination, then he has an instrumental attitude to travelling.

Thirdly, well-established activities such as gardening, teaching, and cooking have standards which are constitutive of performing them well. These are usually related to the point of the activity. If the individual cares about the point of the activity he will therefore care about the standards which are related to its point. If, for instance, he is committed to an inquiry because he genuinely wants to find something out, he will value clarity, will examine evidence carefully, and will attempt to eliminate inconsistencies.

The ingenious could, no doubt, give arguments from the outside in terms of benefits to consumers for the capacity for doing and making things out of love for the job rather

than for some extrinsic reason. It could be claimed, for instance, that bricklayers or doctors in fact render better service to the public if they approach their tasks with this attitude rather than with their minds on their pay packet or someone else's satisfaction. But this is like the utilitarian argument in favour of encouraging religious belief if it comforts the believer and ensures his social conformity. In both cases the practice is looked at without any regard to its intrinsic nature. It is assessed from the outside purely in terms of its actual results, not at all in terms of how it is conceived by its participants. This, of course, is not an entirely irrelevant or immoral way of looking at a practice. But if it predominates a widespread and insidious type of corruption ensues. For the point of view of participants in a practice becomes of decreasing importance. They are regarded basically as vehicles for the promotion of public benefit, whose queer attitudes may sometimes promote this, though no thought of it ever enters their heads. This is the manipulator's attitude to other human beings, the 'hidden hand' in operation from the outside.

3 The incompleteness of instrumental justifications

All these arguments for education deriving from social benefit could also be put in terms of individual benefit with equal plausibility or lack of it. For it merely has to be pointed out that if certain types of knowledge and skill are socially beneficial, then it will be in the individual's interest to acquire some of them; for he has to earn a living and he will be likely to get prestige and reward for his possession of skills and knowledge that are socially demanded. He is afloat in the pool of relevantly trained manpower. There is also a lot of knowledge which will help him spend and consume more wisely – e.g. about types of food, house purchase, income tax, and so on. So the same kind of limited instrumental case can be made for education when it is looked at externally from the individual's point of view as when it is looked at from the point of view of social benefit. But there is an obvious incompleteness about these sorts of social justification, even if they are quite convincing – e.g. the justification for specialized knowledge. For what, in the end, constitutes social benefit? On what is the individual going to spend his wages? If approval is the lure, why should some things rather than others be approved of? What account is to be given of the states of affairs in relation to which other things are to be thought of as instrumental?

The answer of those whose thoughts veer towards consumption is that social benefit is constituted by various forms of pleasure and satisfaction. This, however, is an unilluminating answer; for pleasure and satisfaction are not states of mind supervenient on doing things. Still less is happiness. They are inseparable from things that are done, whether this be swimming, eating a beef-steak, or listening to a symphony. And if it is said that such things are pleasures or done for the pleasure or satisfaction that they give,

this is at least to suggest that they are done in a non-instrumental way. The reasons for doing them arise from the intrinsic features of the things done. So this is to repeat that they need no instrumental justification; they are indeed the sorts of things for the sake of which things are done. It can then be asked why some pleasures rather than others are to be pursued. For many the pursuit of knowledge ranks as a pleasure. So this is no more in need of justification than any other form of pleasure – and no less.

The question, therefore, is whether knowledge and understanding have strong claims to be included as one of the goods which are *constitutive* of a worthwhile level of life and on what considerations their claims are based. This is a particularly pertinent question in the context of the value of education. For it was argued that the instrumental arguments for the breadth of knowledge of the educated man are not very obvious. Also it has been claimed that the educated person is one who is capable, to a certain extent, of a non-instrumental outlook. This would suggest that he does not think of his knowledge purely in terms of the uses to which he can put it. How then can it be justified?

4 Non-instrumental justifications of education

Questions about the intrinsic value of states of mind and of activities are often put by asking whether they are 'worth while'. This term is often used, of course, to raise questions of extrinsic value. If a man is asked whether gardening is worth while he may take it to be a question about its cash value. The term, too, is often used to draw attention to an individual's benefit, or lack of it, from something – e.g. 'It simply is not worth while for him to change his job just before he retires.' But even in its intrinsic uses it has ambiguities. It can be used to indicate that an activity is likely to prove absorbing, to be an enjoyable way of passing the time. Alternatively, it can point to 'worth' that has little to do with absorption or enjoyment. Socrates obviously regarded questioning young men as being worth while; for it was an activity in which they came to grasp what was true, which, for him was a state of mind of ultimate value. But at times he may have found it a bit boring. Let us therefore explore the 'worthwhileness' of education in these two senses.

Absence of boredom

An educated person is one who is possessed of a range of dispositions connected with knowledge and understanding. These will be revealed in what he says, in his emotional expressions, and in what he does. Of particular importance are the activities on which he spends his time and the manner in which he engages in them. Activities can be more or less interesting, absorbing, or fascinating, depending on the dispositions and competences of the agent and the characteristics of the activity in question. Fishing, for instance, is more absorbing in one respect for a man who depends on fish

for his meals or livelihood than for one who does it for sport; but in another respect the interest depends not so much on the urgency of the objective as on the skill there is in it. The more occasions there are for exercising skill in dealing with the unexpected, the more fascinating it becomes as an activity.

Some activities are absorbing because of their palpable and pleasurable point, such as eating, sexual activity, and fighting. But erected on this solid foundation of want is often an elaborate superstructure of rules and conventions which make it possible to indulge in these activities with more or less skill, sensitivity, and understanding. Such activities become 'civilized' when rules develop which protect those engaged in them from brutal efficiency in relation to the obvious end of the exercise. Eating could consist in getting as much food into the stomach in the quickest and most efficient ways – like pigs at a trough. Civilization begins when conventions develop which protect others from the starkness of such 'natural' behaviour. The development of rules and conventions governing the manner in which these activities are pursued, because of the joys involved in mastery, generates an additional source of interest and pleasure.

To take part in activities of this civilized type requires considerable knowledge and understanding. The possession of it at least makes life less boring, as well as making possible levels of boredom beyond the ken of the uneducated. A case may be made, therefore, for the possession of knowledge in so far as it transforms activities by making them more complex and by altering the way in which they are conceived. This can take place in the pursuit of pleasures like those of the palate; it can also take place in spheres of duty which are sometimes regarded as boring. And in spheres like those of politics, or administration, which can be looked at both as pleasures and as duties, the degree of knowledge with which the activities are conduced makes a marked difference. For what there is in politics, administration, or business depends to a large extent on what a person conceives of himself as doing when he engages them.

Another way in which knowledge can exert a transforming influence on conduct is in the sphere of planning – not just in the planning of means to ends within activities but in the avoidance of conflict between activities. This is where talk of happiness, integration, and the harmony of the soul has application. The question is not whether something should be indulged in *for the sake* of something else but whether indulging in some activity to a considerable extent is compatible with indulging in another which may be equally worth while. A man who wants to give equal expression to his passions for golf, gardening, and girls is going to have problems, unless he works out his priorities and imposes some sort of schedule on the use of his time. The case for the use of reason in this sphere of planning is not simply that by imposing coherence on activities conflict, and hence dissatisfaction, are avoided; it is also that the search for order and its implementation in life is itself an endless source of satisfaction. The development of knowledge is inseparable from classification and systematizing. In planning there is the added satisfaction of mastery, of imposing order and system on resistant material. Children begin to delight in this at the stage of concrete operations, and, when more abstract thought develops, it is

a potent source of delight. The love of order permeates Plato's account of reason and Freud regarded it as one of the main effective sources of civilization.

The mention of the pursuit of knowledge introduces another type of justification for knowledge and hence for education. For so far the case for knowledge in relation to the avoidance of boredom has been confined to its transforming influence on other activities. A strong case can be made for it, however, as providing a range of activities which are concerned with its development as an end in itself and which provide an endless source of interest and satisfaction in addition to that concerned with the love of order.

Philosophers from Plato onwards have made strong claims for the pursuit of knowledge as providing the most permanent source of satisfaction and absorption. They have claimed, not altogether convincingly, that the ends of most activites have certain obvious disadvantages when compared with the pursuit of truth. The ends of eating and sex, for instance, depend to a large extent on bodily conditions which are cyclic in character and which limit the time which can be spent on them; there are no such obvious limitations imposed on theoretical activities. Questions of scarcity of the object cannot arise either; for no one is prevented from pursuing truth if many others get absorbed in the same quest. There is no question either, as Spinoza argued so strongly, of the object perishing or passing away.

Theoretical activities could also be defended in respect of the unending opportunities for skill and discrimination which they provide. Most activities consist in bringing about the same state of affairs in a variety of ways under differing conditions. One dinner differs from another just as one game of bridge differs from another. But there is a static quality about them in that they both have either a natural or a conventional objective which can be attained in a limited number of ways. In science or history there is no such attainable objective. For truth is not an object that can be attained; it is an aegis under which there must always be progressive development. To discover something, to falsify the views of one's predecessors, necessarily opens up fresh things to be discovered, fresh hypotheses to be falsified. There must therefore necessarily be unending opportunities for fresh discrimination and judgement and for the development of further skills. An educated person, therefore, who keeps learning in a variety of forms of knowledge, will have a variety of absorbing pursuits to occupy him. The breadth of his interests will minimize the likelihood of boredom.

These arguments carry weight, but they are not entirely convincing. Even an educated person might claim that they are one-sided. In relation to the nature of the ends of activities he might argue that evanescence is essential to the attraction of some pursuits. What would wine-tasting or sexual activity be like if the culminating point was too permanent and prolonged? And is there not something to be said for excursions into the simple and brutish? Does not intensity of pleasure count as well as duration? In relation, too, to the arguments in terms of the open-endedness and progressive features of the pursuit of knowledge, it might well be said that the vision of life presented is altogether too exhausting. It smacks too much of John Dewey and the frontier mentality. It takes too

little account of the conservative side of human nature, the enjoyment of routines, and the security to be found in the well-worn and the familiar.

The values of reason

The major objection to these types of argument for the pursuit of knowledge, or for the transformation of other activities by the development of knowledge, is not to be found, however, within these dimensions or argument. It is rather to exclusive reliance on this form of argument. It is to the presupposition that, leaving aside straightforward moral arguments in terms of justice or the common good, science or wisdom in politics have to be defended purely hedonistically. This is not to say that arguments for education in terms of absorption and satisfaction are not important. Of course they are – especially with the increase in leisure time in modern society and the boring character of so many jobs. It is only to say that this is only one way of justifying education. To gain a fuller perspective we must turn to the other sense of 'worth while'.

In the section headed 'Knowledge and understanding' the connection between 'knowledge' and 'truth' was spelled out. To 'know' implies that what is said or thought is true and that the individual has grounds for what he says or thinks. The utilitarian case both for having a concept of knowledge and for the importance of knowledge in the life of the society and of the individual was briefly indicated. But being concerned about truth has another type of worth. It can be regarded as having a worth which is independent of its benefit. Indeed the state of mind of one who is determined to find out what is true and who is not obviously deluded or mistaken about how things are can be regarded as an ultimate value which provides one of the criteria of benefit. This was the central point of Socrates' answer to Callicles in Plato's *Gorgias*. Someone who values truth in this way may find the constant effort to free his mind from prejudice and error painful; he may sometimes find it wearisome and boring; but it matters to him supremely, even if he falls short of the ideal which he accepts.

Three points must be briefly made to explain further this ideal. Firstly, no finality is assumed or sought for. It is appreciated that error is always possible. Value attaches as much to the attempt to eradicate error as it does to the state of not being in error. Secondly, no positivistic view of the truth, which claims that true statements can only be made in the realms of empirical science, logic, and mathematics, is being assumed. Rather the term is being used widely to cover fields such as morals and understanding other people in which some kind of objectivity is possible, in which reasons can be given which count for or against a judgement. Thirdly, there is a group of virtues which are inseparable from any attempt to decide questions in this way. They are those of truth-telling and sincerity, freedom of thought, clarity, non-arbitrariness, impartiality, a sense of relevance, consistency, respect for evidence, and for people as the source of it – to mention the

main ones. These must be accepted as virtues by anyone who is seriously concerned with answering questions by the use of reason.

How, then, is this concern for truth relevant to the attempt to justify knowledge and understanding? Surely because the activity of justification itself would be unintelligible without it. If a justification is sought for doing *X* rather than *Y,* then *X* and *Y* have first to be distinguished in some way. To distinguish them we have to rely on the forms of discrimination which are available, to locate them within some kind of conceptual scheme. For instance, if the choice is between going into medicine or going into business some understanding of these activities is a prerequisite. Understanding such activities is an open-ended business depending upon how they are conceived and how many aspects of them are explored. So an open-ended employment of various forms of understanding is necessary. And such probing must be conducted at least on the presupposition that obvious misconceptions of what is involved in these activities are to be removed. There is a presumption, in other words, that it is undesirable to believe what is false and desirable to believe what is true.

Secondly, if a reason is to be given for choosing *X* rather than *Y, X* has to be shown to have some feature which *Y* lacks which is relevant to its worth or desirability. If smoking in fact is a threat to health and chewing gum is not, these are relevant considerations, given the assumption that health is desirable. And this, in its turn, presupposes two types of knowledge, one about the effects of smoking as distinct from chewing gum, and the other about the desirability of health. Further questions can, of course, be raised about the desirability of health, which may lead to questions in moral philosophy about the existence and epistemological status of ultimate ends. But whatever the outcome of such explorations they too are part of the quest for further clarity and understanding. Maybe the inquirer will be chary of saying that what he ends up with is 'knowledge', but at least he may claim to have eliminated some errors and to have obtained more clarity and understanding of the issues involved. Arbitrary assertions will have been rejected, irrelevant considerations avoided, and generalizations queried for their evidential basis. These procedures, which are constitutive of the search for truth, are not those for which some individual might have a private preference; they are those which he must observe in rational discussion. This would be unintelligible as a public practice without value being ascribed at least to the elimination of muddle and error.

It might be admitted that there are links of this sort between justification and forms of knowledge in that to ask for reasons for believing or doing anything is to ask for what is only to be found in knowledge and understanding. But three sorts of difficulties might be raised about ascribing value to this concern for what is true. Firstly, the value of justification itself might be queried. Secondly, it might be suggested that this does not establish the value of *breadth* of knowledge. Thirdly, it might be argued that this only establishes the instrumental value of attempts to discover what is true. These three types of difficulty must be dealt with in turn.

The value of justification

The difficulty about querying the value of justification is that any such query, if it is not frivolous, presupposes its value. For to discuss its value is immediately to embark upon reasons for or against it, which is itself a further example of justification. This is not, as might be thought, a purely *ad hominem* argument which might be produced to confound a reflective sceptic. For to give reasons why unreflective people should concern themselves more with what they do, think, and feel is to accept the very values that are at issue. No reason, therefore, can be given for justification without presupposing the values which are immanent in it as an activity.

It might be thought that this smacks of arbitrariness. But this is not so; for 'arbitrariness' is a complaint that only has application within a context where reasons can be given. To pick out the values presupposed by the search for reasons is to make explicit what gives point to the charge of arbitrariness. There is an important sense, too, in which anyone who denies the value of justification, not by making a case against it, which is to presuppose it, but by unreflectively relying on feelings in his stomach or on what other people say, is himself guilty of arbitrariness; for human life is a context in which the demands of reason are inescapable. Ultimately they cannot be satisfied by recourse to such methods. So anyone who relies on them is criticizable in the sense that he adopts procedures which are inappropriate to demands that are admitted, and must be admitted by anyone who takes part in human life.

To explain this point properly would require a treatise on man as a rational animal. All that can be here provided is a short sketch of the broad contours of the demand for justification that is immanent in human life. Human beings, like animals, have from the very start of their lives expectations of their environment, some of which are falsified. With the development of language these expectations come to be formulated and special words are used for the assessment of the content of these expectations and for how they are to be regarded in respect of their epistemological status. Words like 'true' and 'false' are used, for instance, to appraise the contents, and the term 'belief' for the attitude of mind that is appropriate to what is true. Perceiving and remembering are distinguished by their built-in truth claims from merely imagining. Knowledge is similarly distinguished from opinion. In learning we come up to standards of correctness as a result of past experience. Our language, which is riddled with such appraisals, bears witness to the claims of reason on our sensibility. It reflects our position as fallible creatures, beset by fears and wishes, in a world whose regularities have laboriously to be discovered.

The same sort of point can be made about human conduct. For human beings do not just veer towards goals like moths towards a light; they are not just programmed by an instinctive equipment. They conceive of ends, deliberate about them and about the means to them. They follow rules and revise and assess them. Assessment indeed has a toe-hold in every feature of this form of behaviour, which, in this respect, is to be contrasted with that of a man who falls off a cliff or whose knee jerks when hit with a hammer. Words like 'right', 'good', and 'ought' reflect this constant scrutiny and monitoring of

human actions.

Man is thus a creature who lives under the demands of reason. He can, of course, be unreasonable or irrational; but these terms are only intelligible as fallings short in respect of reason. An unreasonable man has reasons, but bad ones; an irrational man acts or holds beliefs in the face of reasons. But how does it help the argument to show that human life is only intelligible on the assumption that the demands of reason are admitted, and woven into the fabric of human life? It helps because it makes plain that the demands of reason are not just an option available to the reflective. Any man who emerges from infancy tries to perceive, to remember, to infer, to learn, and to regulate his wants. If he is to do this he must have recourse to some procedure of assessment. For how else could he determine what to believe or do? In their early years all human being are intiated into human life by their elders and rely for a long time on procedures connected with authority and custom. They believe what they are told and do what others do and expect of them. Many manage most of their lives by reliance on such procedures. This fact, however, is a reflection of human psychology rather than of the logic of the situation; for ultimately such procedures are inappropriate to the demand that they are meant to serve. For belief is the attitude which is appropriate to what is true, and no statement is true just because an individual or group proclaims it. For the person whose word is believed has himself to have some procedure for determining what is true. In the end there must be procedures which depend not just on going on what somebody else says but on looking at the reasons which are relevant to the truth of the statement. The truth of a lot of statements depends upon the evidence of the senses; and all men have sense-organs. Similar reasons for action are connected with human wants; and all men have wants. There may be good reasons, in certain spheres of life, for reliance on authorities; but such authorities, logically speaking, can only be regarded as provisional. They cannot be regarded as the ultimate source of what is true, right, and good. This goes against the logic of the situation.

Thus those who rely permanently and perpetually on custom or authority are criticizable because they are relying on procedures of assessment which are not ultimately appropriate to the nature of belief and conduct. To say, therefore, that men ought to rely more on their reason, that they ought to be more concerned with first-hand justification, is to claim that they are systematically falling down on a job on which they are already engaged. It is not to commit some version of the naturalistic fallacy by basing a demand for a type of life on features of human life which make it distinctively human. For this would be to repeat the errors of the old Greek doctrine of function. Rather it is to say that human life already bears witness to the demands of reason. Without some acceptance by men of such demands their life would be unintelligible. But given the acceptance of such demands they are proceeding in a way which is inappropriate to satisfying them. Concern for truth is written into human life. There are procedures which are ultimately inappropriate for giving expression to this concern.

This is not to say, of course, that there are not *other* features of life which are valuable – love for others, for instance. It is not even to say that other such concerns may not be

more valuable. It is only to say that at least some attempt must be made to satisfy the admitted demands that reason makes upon human life. If, for instance, someone is loved under descriptions which are manifestly false, this is a fault. If, too, a person is deluded in thinking that he loves someone – if, for instance, he mistakes love of being loved for loving someone, this too is a criticism.

This argument, which bases the case for the development of knowledge and understanding on its connection with justification, does not make a case for the pursuit of any kind of knowledge. It only points to the importance of knowledge that is relevant to the assessment of belief, conduct, and feeling. It does not show, for instance, that there is value in amassing a vast store of information, in learning by heart every tenth name in a telephone directory. And this accords well with the account of the sort of knowledge that was ascribed to an educated person. For to be educated is to have one's own view of the world transformed by the development and systematization of conceptual schemes. It is to be disposed to ask the reason why of things. It is not to have a store of what Whitehead called 'inert ideas'.

The case for breadth

It might still be claimed, however, that this type of argument only shows the value of some sort of knowledge; it does not establish the value of the breadth of understanding characteristic of the educated man. A man might just look for grounds of a certain sort of beliefs – e.g. empirical grounds. He might only value philosophy.

The case for breadth derives from the original link that was claimed between justification and forms of knowledge. For if a choice has to be made between alternatives these have both to be sampled in some way and discriminated in some way. It is not always possible to do the former but the latter must be done for this to rank as a choice. The description of possible activities open to anyone and hence the discussion of their value is not a matter of mere observation. For they depend, in part, on how they are conceived, and this is very varied. If the choice is, for instance, between an activity like cooking or one like art or science, what is going to be emphasized as characterizing these activities? Many such activities – chess, for instance, or mathematics – are difficult to understand without a period of initiation. But they cannot simply be engaged in; they have to be viewed in a certain way. And this will depend upon the forms of understanding that are available and the extent to which the individual has been initiated into them. It would be unreasonable, therefore, to deprive anyone of access in an arbitrary way to forms of understanding which might throw light on alternatives open to him. This is the basic argument for breadth in education.

In the educational situation we have positively to put others in the way of such forms of understanding which may aid their assessment of options open to them. It is of great importance in a society such as ours in which there are many lifestyles open to individuals and in which they are encouraged to choose between them, and to make something of themselves. But this value accorded to autonomy, which demands criticism

of what is handed on and some first-hand assessment of it, would be unintelligible without the values immanent in justification. Indeed it is largely an implementation of them. For it demands not only critical reflection on rules and activities, with the search for grounds that this involves, but also a genuineness which is connected with the rejection of second-hand considerations. By that I mean that a conventionally minded person goes on what others say. If he has reasons for doing things these are connected with the approval which he will get if he does them and the disapproval if he does not. These are reasons of a sort but are artificially related to what is done. They are reasons for doing a whole variety of things, not this thing in particular. If, for instance, people refrain from smoking because they are disapproved of if they do, this is not connected with smoking in the way in which the probability of lung cancer is connected. As Hume put this point in the context of morality: 'No action can be virtuous or morally good unless there be in human nature some motive to produce it distinct from the sense of its morality.' The same sort of point can be made about other forms of judgement – e.g. aesthetic, scientific, religious. So if the individual is to be helped to discriminate between possibilities open to him in an authentic, as distinct from a second-hand way, he has to be initiated into the different forms of reasoning, which employ different criteria for the relevance of reasons.

A corollary of this type of argument for breadth of understanding would be that some forms of knowledge are of more value from the point of view of a 'liberal education' than others, namely those which have a more far-reaching influence on conceptual schemes and forms of understanding. There are forms of understanding such as science, philosophy, literature, and history which have a far-ranging cognitive content. This is one feature which distinguishes them from 'knowing how' and the sort of knowledge that people have who are adepts at games and at practical skills. There is a limited amount to know about riding bicycles, swimming, or golf. Furthermore, what is known sheds little light on much else.

Science, history, literary appreciation, and philosophy, on the other hand, have a far-ranging cognitive content which gives them a value denied to other more circumscribed activities. They consist largely in the explanation, assessment, and illumination of the different facets of life. They can thus insensibly change a man's view of the world. The point, then, about activities such as science, philosophy, and history is that they need not, like games, be isolated and confined to set times and places. A person who has pursued them systematically can develop conceptual schemes and forms of appraisal which transform everything else that he does.

An instrumental type of argument?

But, it might be said, this shows only the *instrumental* value of breadth of understanding and imagination. It does not show that a variety of forms of knowledge should be pursued for any other reason, particularly if they are rather boring. This argument also shows the great importance of physical education. For without a fit body a man's attempts to answer the question 'Why do this rather than that?' might

be sluggish or slovenly. So it provides, it seems, a transcendental deduction of the principle of physical fitness! The seeming correctness of such a deduction, if the empirical connection were to be shown, does not establish that physical exercise has any value except of an instrumental sort.

There is, however, a confusion in this comparison between physical exercise and the pursuit of knowledge in their relations to justification; for the former is suggested as an empirically necessary condition and hence is properly regarded as instrumental, whereas the latter is connected by logical relationships such as those of 'relevance', 'providing evidence', 'illuminating', and 'explaining'. Indeed the latter is in an educational type of relationship to justification in that it suggests avenues of learning which are relevant to choice, and this is not properly conceived of as an instrumental relationship, as was argued under 'Processes of Education' in Section 1. In engaging in the activity of justification the individual is envisaged as exploring the possibilities open to him by developing the ways of discriminating between them that are available to him – i.e. through the different form of understanding such as science, history, literature, which the human race has laboriously developed. This process of learning is logically, not causally related, to the questioning situation. He will be articulating, with increasing understanding and imagination, aspects of the situation in which he is placed, and in pursuing various differentiated forms of inquiry he will be instantiating, on a wider scale, the very values which are present in his original situation – e.g. respect for facts and evidence, precision, clarity, rejection of arbitrariness, consistency, and the general determination to get to the bottom of things. If, for instance, he considers one of the possibilities open to him as desirable he must, as has already been argued, view this under a certain description. The question then arises whether this description is really applicable and whether there is any other way of looking at this possibility which might be relevant. The ethical question immediately articulates itself into other sorts of questions. The values of reason, such as those of consistency, relevance, and clarity, inherent in such educational explorations are the values of the starting-point 'writ large'.

It is important to stress the values of reason which are immanent in such attempts to discriminate alternatives with more clarity and precision rather than the 'means–end' type of link between questioning and forms of knowledge that can often be both logical, and of the means–end type, as in the case of the relationship between learning to read and reading George Eliot, previously explained (see note 2). Socrates, it seems, gave up his pursuit of knowledge in the physical sciences in favour of devotion to ethics and psychology. It could be argued that, leaving aside *other* questions to do with what he found absorbing, he could well have thought that he ought to study psychological questions deeply only because of their logical links with ethical questions. He had reason to engage in such a disinterested inquiry but did not value this form of knowledge 'for its own sake'. But this is to misconceive the way in which the value of concern for truth enters into both answering justificatory questions *and* into asking them. The point is that value is located in the procedures necessary to explicate what is meant by *justification.*

In other words the value is not in the acquisition of knowledge *per se* but in the demands of reason inherent both in answering questions of this sort and in asking them. Evidence should be produced, questions should be clearly put, alternatives should be set out in a clear and informed way, inconsistencies and contradictions in argument should be avoided, relevant considerations should be explored, and arbitrariness avoided. These monitoring and warranting types of relationship, which are characteristic of the use of reason, are not instrumental types of relationship. They are articulations of the ideal implicit in thought and action. We are drawn towards this ideal by what I have elsewhere called the 'rational passions'.[4] And this ideal may draw us towards types of inquiry which we do not find particularly absorbing in their own right.

To put this point in another way: much has been said in this section about the 'concern for truth' and 'the demands of reason'. The value picked out by these expressions is not to be thought of as a kind of consumer value which bestows importance on the accumulation of countless true propositions. Devotion to the pursuit of knowledge, in this sense, may also be fascinating, and a case can be made for it in terms of the first sense of 'worth while'. But that type of argument is not now being used either. Value is being ascribed to the quality of knowledge rather than to its amount or to its capacity to mitigate boredom. It is being claimed that what is valuable is inherent in the demand that what is done, thought, or felt should be rationally scrutinized.

It will not do to suggest that this concern for truth is instrumentally valuable just because people need to know in order to satisfy their wants, including their desire for knowledge itself, unless 'want' is used in a very general sense which makes it a conceptual truth that anything which people can value must be, in some sense, what they want. For, firstly, to want is always to want under some description that involves belief; hence wants can be more or less examined. Secondly, one of the most perplexing questions of conduct is whether, in any ordinary sense of 'want', people ought to do what they want to do. Thirdly, the very notion of 'instrumentality' presupposes the demand of reason. For, as Kant put it, taking a means to an end presupposes the axiom of reason that to will the end is to will the means. Thus the demands of reason are presupposed in the form of thought which might lead us to think of its value as being instrumental.

On the other hand the demand for truth is not an absolute demand in the sense that it can never be over-ridden. It sometimes can be, if, in some situation, some other value is more pressing. In general, for instance, it is undesirable that people should ignore facts about themselves or about others which are relevant to what they should do. But on a particular occasion, when someone's suffering is manifestly at stake for instance, it might be argued that it is just as well for a person not to be too persistent in his demand for truth, if satisfying this demand would occasion great suffering. The values of reason are only one type of value. As has been argued from the start, there are other values, e.g. love for others, the avoidance of suffering. But situations like this, in which there is a conflict of values, do not affect the general status for the concern for truth.

As E.M. Forster put it: 'Yes, for we fight for more than Love or Pleasure: there is Truth. Truth counts. Truth does Count.'[5]

This type of argument for the value of knowledge helps to explain the value inherent in being educated not only of breadth of knowledge, as previously explained, but also of what was called 'cognitive perspective'. What was suggested is that an educated person is not one who has his mind composed of *disconnected* items of knowledge. What he knows and understands should be seen to be interrelated in terms of consistency, relevance, evidence, implication, and other such rational connections. If his knowledge is linked together in this way it is 'integrated' in one sense of the term. It may well be, too, that certain studies such as philosophy, which explicitly examines grounds for different types of knowledge and their interrelationship, and literature, which imaginatively depicts people in situations in which they have to make complex judgements and respond emotionally to perplexing situations, contribute to the development of this cognitive perspective.

Those who favour certain educational methods might argue that the exploration of literature, of history, and of philosophy should not begin until children begin to be troubled or curious about various aspects of the human condition. And certainly, if inquiries and explorations move outwards from a centre of puzzlement and concern, they are more likely to be genuine and to instantiate the values immanent in justification in a first-hand way. Others, however, might argue that one way of generating such concern and puzzlement in people is to initiate them into our human heritage. This kind of imaginative situation may be necessary to make people more alive to their position in the world as believers and choosers. But there is the danger of the second-hand in this approach. There is also the possibility that individuals may fail to connect, to transfer values learned in a specialized context to wider contexts. A person, for instance, may be ruthless in demanding evidence for assumptions when learning history or social science. But he may not show the same ruthlessness when having to make up his mind about policies presented to him by politicians. This raises questions which are, in part, empirical about transfer of learning. But it does not, I think, affect the basic point about the non-instrumental features of the relationship between justification, and the forms of understanding which contribute to it.

In a purely philosophical context it might be said, then, that the demand for justification presupposes the acceptance of the values implicit in it. In an educational context, however, children must be initiated somehow into those forms of understanding, which are of particular relevance to justification. It is, of course, no accident that there should be these two ways of explicating this relationship. For processes of education are processes by means of which people come to know and to understand. These are implementations, through time, by means of learning, of the values and procedures implicit in justification. Education, properly understood, is the attempt to actualize the ideal implicit in Socrates' saying that the unexamined life is not worth living.

5 The non-instrumental attitude

An educated person, it was argued, is characterized not just by his abiding concern for knowledge and understanding but also by the capacity to adopt, to a certain extent, a non-instrumental attitude to activities. How can this attitude be justified? This is not difficult; for the justification of it is implicit in what has already been said. It is presupposed by the determination to search for justification. Anyone who asks the question about his life 'Why do this rather than that?' has already reached the stage at which he sees that instrumental justifications must reach a stopping place in activities that must be regarded as providing end-points for such justifications. To ask of his pattern of life 'What is the point of it all?' is to ask for features internal to it which constitute reasons for pursuing it. A stage has been reached at which the ordinary use of 'point' has no application – unless, that is, the same types of question are transferred to an afterlife or to the life of future generations. So a person who asks this type of question seriously demonstrates that he is not a stranger to this attitude. To what extent it will in fact transform his way of going about particular activities within his life cannot be inferred from this capacity for reflection. It is, to a certain extent, an empirical question – but not entirely empirical, because of the logical connection between the general capacity to reflect and particular instantiations of it.

In so far, however, as he values knowledge and understanding he values one very important ingredient in the non-instrumental attitude; for this attitude requires attention to the actual features of that with which he is confronted, as distinct from tunnel vision determined by his own wants. He is concerned about what is 'out there'. Even at the crudest level a person who *just* regards a piece of fish as a way of satisfying his hunger, or a glass of wine as a way of satisfying his thirst, ignores a range of features. He fails to discriminate the variety of tastes. Conversely he will think nothing of using a beautiful glass to house his tooth-brush – unless, of course, he thinks that it is worth a lot of money and that he might break it. In sexual activity, too, he will regard a woman as a necessary object for satisfying his lust; he will be indifferent to her idiosyncracies and point of view as a person. He will only listen to people in so far as they share his purposes or provide, by their remarks, springboards for his own self-display. His interest in people and things is limited to the use he can make of them. He lacks interest in and concerns for what is 'out there'.

A person, on the other hand, who presses the question 'Why do this rather than that?' already accepts the limitations of his egocentric vision. He is not satisfied with a life geared to unexamined wants. He wonders whether some of the things that he wants are really worth wanting or whether he really wants them. He wonders about the relevance of his wants. In attempting to find out what is the case he may reveal features of situations that in no way serve his wants and which indeed may run counter to them. An unreflective

businessman, for instance, might visit an underdeveloped country with a view to setting up a factory. But, on going into all the details of what this would involve, he might become more and more aware of the distruption of a way of life that is entailed. He might 'not want to know' or he might begin to question the whole enterprise. And if he began to question this particular feature of business life he might begin to query the way of life more generally.

Another aspect of the instrumental attitude is the view of time that goes with it. For the instrumentally minded good lies always in future consumption. The present has to be hurried through for the sake of what lies ahead. It is not to be dwelt in and its aspects explored. To a person who uses his reason this attitude is just as unreasonable as the opposed cult of instancy. For, as Sidgwick put it, to a rational person, 'Hereafter as such is to be regarded neither more nor less than now.'[6] Reasons have to be given for instant or delayed gratification other than temporal position – e.g. 'If you wait you won't be able to have it at all' or 'If you wait there will be more of it.' The important thing for a man is to connect, to grasp the features of objects and situations and the relationships which structure his life. It is not, therefore, the fact that the pleasure of smoking is to be had now or in five minutes that matters; it is rather how it is to be conceived and its relation to other things in life. Can smoking, like sexual activity, be conceived of not simply as a physical pleasure, but also as an expression of love? Can it be done with skill and grace like dancing? And are its relationships to other human activities anything other than detrimental?

To ascribe a non-instrumental attitude to a person is not, of course, to lay down that he will indulge in some activities rather than others. It is only to indicate the way in which he will go about activities and conceive them. He will not always do things for the sake of some extrinsic end. He will, first of all, enjoy performing well according to the standards required. He will have an attitude of care in other words. But this care will be related to the point of the activity. He will feel humility towards the givenness of the features of the activity, towards the impersonal demands of its standards. And he will have a sense of its connection with other things in life, a wary consciousness of the past and the future and of the place of what is being done in the passage through the present. Indeed, as Spinoza put it, he should be capable of viewing what he does 'under a certain aspect of eternity'.

6 Concluding problem

There is a major outstanding problem to which this approach to justification gives rise. Two types of value have been distinguished, which underpin the life of an educated person, leaving aside moral values such as justice, and the minimization of suffering, which structure the interpersonal realm of conduct. These are (1) values relevant to the avoidance of boredom, in relation to which the pursuit of knowledge

was accorded a high place, and (2) values implicit in the demands of reason, which give rise to virtues such as humility, hatred of arbitrariness, consistency, clarity, and so on. If a reasonable person examines his beliefs or conduct these virtues govern his conduct of the inquiry; but he does not necessarily find this kind of examination enjoyable or absorbing.

Now, for reasons that were explained under 'Processes of Education' (Section 1), when dealing with processes of education, a person can only *become* educated if he pursues theoretical activities such as science and literature and/or practical activities which require a fair degree of understanding; but why, having become educated, should he devote himself much to activities of this sort? Why should he choose to spend much of his time in reading, taking part in discussions, or in demanding practical activities such as engineering? On occasions, of course, in acknowledgement of the demands of reason, he may feel obliged to enlighten himself on some issue, to seek information which is relevant to his beliefs and action. And while so doing he submits to the standards of such a disinterested pursuit. But why should he seek out *any* such pursuits? To take a parallel in the moral sphere: why should a person who accepts the principle of justice, and who acknowledges its demands on his life by relevant actions and inquiries when occasions arise, pursue the promotion of justice as an *activity* – e.g. by working as a judge or as a social reformer? Similarly in this sphere of worthwhile pursuits why should not an educated man settle for an undemanding job which allows him plenty of time for playing golf, which is the one activity which he really enjoys apart from eating, sun-bathing, and occasionally making love to his wife? He is, of course, capable of seeing point in a more Dewey type of life of expanding experience and understanding. He is not a philistine; neither is he particularly instrumental in his outlook. He just loves his game of golf more than any of the more intellectually taxing types of pursuits. Golf is to him what he presumes science is to the other fellow.

Could the answer be connected with the fact, already pointed out, that the use of reason itself exemplifies the two types of value? On the one hand is the absorption springing from curiosity and from the love of order, etc. Human beings, it might be said, 'naturally' find discrepancies between what they expect and what they experience intolerable. This is what leads them to learn according to cognitive theories of motivation stemming from Piaget. On the other hand there are the normative demands connected with the use of reason. Inconsistencies and confusions in thought ought to be removed; evidence ought to be sought for and arbitrariness avoided. It is conceivable that the latter type of value could be accepted by a person who was unmoved by curiosity and by the desire to sort things out? Is this not like saying, in the moral sphere, that respect for persons, as a moral attitude, could exist without some natural sympathy for them?

There may well be some relationships, which are not purely contingent, between the 'natural' and the normative aspects of the use of reason, which may parallel those between

sympathy and respect, but it would require another paper to eludicate them. The doubt, as far as this paper goes, is whether such connections need be strong enough to carry the required weight. If might be shown that acceptance of the demands of reason presupposes certain 'natural' passions such as curiosity and the love of order, but would it show enough to make it necessarily the case that an educated person must not only proceed in a rational way with regard to his beliefs and conduct but must also adopt some pursuits for their own sake which provide ample scope for curiosity or which are taxing in relation to the level of understanding that they require? Does not Dewey's educational method, which requires that learning should always be harnessed to spontaneous interest and curiosity, seem appropriate because so many people emerge from school and university with some degree of sophistication and capacity for rational reflection, but with a singular lack of enthusiasm either for further theoretical pursuits or for practical activities that make frequent and open-ended demands on their understanding? Could not his methods be seen as an attempt to close the gap between the two types of value? And does not this suggest that, as closing this gap depends upon empirical conditions underlying methods of learning, the connection in question is an empirical connection? Indeed is not one of the main tasks of the educator the devising of procedures which are likely to minimize this type of gap?

This sounds plausible but a nagging doubt remains. The problem can be summarized as follows:

1. There are activities such as science, engineering, the study of literature, etc., by engaging in which a person becomes an educated person – one who has breadth and depth of understanding and who is prepared to examine his beliefs and conduct.

2. As an educated person he may, later on, see reason to pursue such activities on occasions, if he sees their relevance to some issue of belief and conduct, though he may not find them particularly absorbing. Such exercises will be manifestations of his acceptance of the demands of reason.

3. But, as an educated person, he will do *some* things for their own sake. Whatever he does will be, to a certain extent, transformed by his level of understanding, but will he necessarily pursue, for their own sake, some activities of the sort that he pursues or has pursued in contexts (1) and (2), which make demands on his understanding? Is it intelligible that he should both be educated and find *all* such activities too frustrating or boring to pursue for their own sake? Would such a man be any more intelligible than Kant's moral being, who is virtuous only out of respect for the law? Socrates may have sometimes regarded his pursuit of truth with others as a boring duty, though we know that he did not always find it so. But does it not seem inconceivable that he could *always* have found it boring? And is this *simply* because of the empirical fact that he spent a lot of time that way?

Acknowledgement

Notes

1. R.S. Peters, 'Education and the Educated Man', *Proceedings of the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain,* Vol. 4 (Jan. 1970).

2. In other cases, however, the logical relationship of the learning process to the product is that of being a necessary preliminary rather than a full-blooded instantiation. Reading, for instance, is often taught as a kind of discrimination skill. Practising such discriminations may be thought of as instantiating little that is valuable. It is valuable only as a necessary preliminary to reading poetry with sensitivity and expression, or to reading George Eliot's novels.

3. See 'Education, Democracy and the Public Interest' in R.S. Peters (ed.) *Philosophy of Education* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1973).

4. See R.S. Peters, 'Reason and Passion', in G. Vesey (ed.) *The Proper Study,* Royal Institute of Philosophy (London: Macmillan, 1971).

5. E.M. Forster, *A Room with a View* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1955), p. 218.

6. H. Sidgwick, *The Methods of Ethics* (Papermac ed., London: Macmillan, 1962), p. 381.

11

(ii) EDUCATION AND JUSTIFICATION

R.K. Elliott

This paper starts from and keeps constantly in touch with the arguments advanced and points of view expressed in Richard Peters' profound and fascinating article 'The Justification of Education'.[1] Its intentions are to examine one or two of his central ideas in some detail, to indicate that his account is incomplete in certain respects, and to draw attention to what seems to be an ambivalence in his attitude to the academic disciplines and their educational value. Although the method I shall adopt will be critical, I hope that this paper will have some value as an exegesis of his, which is a work of considerable difficulty. I shall be concerned only with Peters' 'non-instrumental' justification of education. This includes a 'hedonistic' and a 'non-hedonistic' justification. A brief summary of the non-hedonistic justification follows immediately below.

Peters argues that the demand for justification is essential to human life. The educational pursuit of truth in disciplines such as science, philosophy, literature, and history is in certain fundamental respects the same as the pursuit of truth in everyday life or any other non-educational context, since in any context the pursuit of truth involves virtues such as truthfulness, clarity, non-arbitrariness, impartiality, a sense of relevance, consistency, respect for evidence, etc. Hence, in a context of learning, persons who are pursuing truth in the disciplines are acquiring rational virtues which are essential for a reflective justification of their beliefs, actions and feelings. Peters connects justification with Socratic 'examination of life', and since he takes education to be the implementation of the values and procedures implicit in justification, he is able to represent it as an attempt to actualize the Socratic ideal expressed in the remark that the unexamined life is not worth living. As such it is both preparatory to and a beginning of the good life. Because there is a close logical connection between education and the 'end' – the good life – to which it is conducive, it is claimed that the argument constitutes a non-instrumental justification of education.

The non-hedonistic justification is indeed non-instrumental. All features which are essential to justification must be present whenever justification is accomplished. There

is therefore an essential identity between justification practised within an educational context and justification practised outside education. The non-instrumental justification will be *adequate* if and only if the values and procedures implicit in justification can be seen as the entire valuable content transmitted by education. Peters writes: 'It is being claimed that what is valuable (in devotion to the pursuit of knowledge) is the demand that what is done, thought or felt should be rationally assessed.' The non-hedonistic justification *is* therefore adequate, since from the non-hedonistic standpoint awareness and acceptance of the formal demands of reason, obedience to which is essential for justification, and the knowledge how to fulfil these demands, constitute the entire content of education as such. The educational study of the disciplines and their objects is justified on the ground that through it the learner acquires the rational virtues which are essential for reflective thought on matters of a different kind, chiefly what the individual is to do or has done, what he believes and how he feels about the various matters with which he is existentially concerned, what style of life he is to adopt, and whether the style of life he has adopted is a good one. Peters has succeeded in showing that the study of academic subjects at school and university is relevant to the life of those who do not continue to study these subjects afterwards, and in what an important way it is relevant. There would be cause for concern only if the non-hedonistic justification were the only non-instrumental justification provided, or the only effective non-instrumental justification, for in that case the entire educational value of the study of the disciplines and their objects would be instrumental to the demand for justification. Then an apt analogy to the educational study of the disciplines would be associating with prostitutes in order to acquire the arts of love.

The justification which Peters provides of the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake is his 'hedonistic' justification, but his presentation of it lacks conviction, and it fails to accomplish its purpose. That it has failed becomes obvious in his remarks concerning the value of continuing with demanding intellectual activity for its own sake after education is complete. It is hard to understand why Peters is so concerned because so many people, after they have become educated, show no desire to continue with demanding theoretical study or other demanding intellectual activity for its own sake. One would suppose that once the rational virtues essential to justification have been achieved there would be no further need for an educated person to continue the demanding pursuit of knowledge, unless perhaps he were required to make some decision which called for more mathematical knowledge, for example, than his education had provided. Peters recognises that further study might be needed for such a purpose, but what he is concerned about is that after becoming educated people no longer go on studying *for the sake of pleasure* that the demanding pursuit of truth affords. Instead they take their pleasure in golf and other such activities.

Peters argues that an interest in some demanding study will minimize boredom and likelihood of boredom in a person's life. This may well be true, but study is not the only preventative of boredom. What does it matter if an educated person occupies his

leisure-time in golf, if it gives him pleasure and keeps boredom away, rather than in studying some academic subject for the same reasons? His education has equipped him to realize the Socratic idea of self-examination, which, in Peters' view, is the one thing that is essential to the good life. Or, if pleasure is necessary as well, he is getting it from golf – and health besides. In the last section of his paper Peters seems to attribute a high worth to a person's continuing the demanding pursuit of truth for its own sake after education has been completed, and seems to want to regard it as a criterion of educational success, but nothing he has said in the body of his paper justifies him in this.

In his hedonistic justification Peters conceives the pursuit of truth in an Aristotelian manner, as the unimpeded actualization of powers of discrimination and judgement which has pleasure as its crown or consummation. In his non-hedonistic justification he conceives it in a more Kantian manner as obedience to the demands of reason for their own sake, an obedience which may be tedious and painful but which is as valued when it fails to attain truth as when it succeeds. But these descriptions do not cover the whole range of non-instrumental values of the pursuit of truth. The values of that pursuit of truth which is not motivated solely by concern for truth, but by some idea of benefit inherent in the pursuit of truth, are very badly served by the Aristotelian type of description of 'enjoyment' which Peters provides. If that description is taken as adequate to explain the 'fascination' of the pursuit of knowledge, there is no real alternative but to base any serious non-instrumental justification of the demanding pursuit of truth on the values implicit in the concern for truth, and this is in effect what Peters does. A more adequate phenomenology of enquiry would strengthen the so-called 'hedonistic' justification, and provide better grounds for regarding continuing the demanding pursuit of truth for its own sake, after education is complete, as a condition of educational success.

I do not know many philosophers who philosophize seriously in the easy spontaneous way in which Pele plays football, but Aristotle and Leibniz and others may have done so, and it would perhaps be correct to regard a person who accomplishes a demanding enquiry in an effortless style as having enjoyed the doing of it, and to suppose his enjoyment to have been of a straightforward hedonic kind. Similarly, persons who are not much concerned about the matters into which they are enquiring often enjoy pursuing the truth of them, when through their exercise of skill and ingenuity the truth rapidly discloses itself. Such brilliant pleasures are only infrequently experienced by many of those who seek for truth in the disciplines. They exercise judgement and discrimination, of course, but are not aware of these acts as pleasure. A long and difficult enquiry has the character of a venture which comprehensively engages the self of the enquirer. Anxiety is frequently the prevailing mood, and confusion, dead-ends, disappointments, lack of inspiration, and lack of energy combine to generate wretchedness. On the other hand, insights occur unexpectedly, ways open up where there had seemed to be no way, things which had seemed disparate fall together, and so

on. Disagreeable experiences probably occupy more of the total time of the enquiry than agreeable experiences, and, on reflection, it is often hard to believe that their intensity was less.

The enquirer may nevertheless be able to regard the joys of the venture as worth more than the pains. If he does, he may be prepared to say that he 'enjoyed' the experience of enquiry, but he may be reluctant to do so. He may feel it more appropriate to say that he found the experience 'rewarding', or that he 'got a lot out of it'. The use of these expressions substitutes a virtually empty notion of benefit for the hedonic notion.

Whether an enquiry is assessed favourably in this way is likely to depend, to some extent, on the depth of the enquirer's desire for knowledge, the importance he attaches to the enquiry, the respect in which he holds the discipline, and the degree of success which he achieves. When desire for knowledge is strong, the enquiry felt to be important, and the discipline respected, insights tend to be more exciting and success more gratefully received. When an enquiry involves exceptional pain, its joys tend to be correspondingly intense. Consequently, Peters' distinction between enquiry which is enjoyable and that which is endured for the sake of truth is difficult to apply to very many instances of enquiry, in the disciplines. If they are found rewarding it is partly because concern for truth makes it possible to see the joys as worth more than the pains, but it may be that finding an experience of enquiry rewarding does not depend even on this. In many cases it looks as if what is valued is not the joys despite the pains, but the whole complex of pains and joys together, that is to say the venture as such, so long as it is prosecuted with sufficient vigour and attains a certain measure of success.

If a person regards the experience of an enquiry as painful on the whole rather than pleasant yet still judges the experience to have been rewarding, this may be because in the pursuit of it he felt himself to be living powerfully as a thinking being. Enquiry seems worthwhile to him as a form of life in which he invests his energy, and he sees an enquiry, as it develops, as an expression of his vitality. He necessarily understands enquiry as having truth at its end, but he does not value enquiry solely out of concern for truth and perhaps not primarily so. Truth may be pursued in the disciplines in response to a vital demand, and it may be that many people have this motive without clearly knowing it. They cannot honestly say that they 'enjoy' enquiry or 'take delight' in it, and although they have a concern for truth they are aware, or half-aware, that this does not explain the strength of their desire to engage in enquiry. Enquiry is valued for its own sake as a vital activity or form of life. What does it matter if it is painful? So is long-distance running.

Kant defines might as the power to overcome hindrances, and for the most part tasks which offer no hindrances provide little vital satisfaction. Even thinkers of the highest ability, who could achieve considerable success without painful effort, tend to undertake tasks which are, as we say, 'at the limits of their powers', or which 'stretch

their powers to the uttermost', and sometimes suffer shipwreck as a result. They choose to live the life of the intellect as powerfully as they can. This cannot be explained simply by reference to concern for truth, though truth is what they are aiming at, as artists aim at producing something beautiful, and runners aim at coming in first.

Putting forth one's powers against great hindrances is not normally pleasant, but the opposite. Consequently, a person who chooses to live as vigorously as he can as a thinking being chooses abundant pain and hardship, both to a high degree, but these are not evils when they are necessary elements in a freely chosen mode of life.

Vital values are as fundamental as pleasure or the values of reason and do not have to be justified by reference to these other values. Except in special circumstances, no justification is needed for a person's choosing to go on living rather than to die. He does not have to convince himself that the future holds out the propect of a favourable balance of pleasure over pain, nor does he have to justify his choice to live by reference to any demand of reason. Obedience to the demands of reason, and even their existence, presuppose concurrence with vital demands, for what are the demands of reason to a person who is unable to bring himself to go on living, or to use his mind? The vital value with which we are especially concerned is intellectual vitality/vitally rewarding intellectual activity (especially enquiry). It is both the capacity to respond to, and activity as response to, the demand felt by human beings for as full and vigorous an exercise of their powers as possible. In general, the vital demand is to live at the top of one's bent, not only to live keenly and powerfully in the life of the intellect, but also in the life of the senses, the life of physical activity, and the life of practical concern.

So far, little reference has been made to the objects about which truth is sought in enquiry undertaken for its own sake. This deficiency needs to be made good if the values of the non-instrumental pursuit of demanding enquiry are to be clearly seen. In some forms of knowledge, literary criticism for example, the enquirers attach a high value to objects of the kinds they study. It is because he loves poetry that a critic seeks the truth of poems rather than of other things; if he valued poems simply as occasions for actualising his general love of knowledge he would not be a lover of poetry at all. If the object of history is the life of past man, then although it would be odd to say that this object is valued, acquaintance with it and imaginative participation in it is valued. It is not studied only for knowing the truth about it, or for the opportunities it provides for vitally rewarding endeavour. To many scientists the principles and laws discovered by science in its various domains are conceived as foundations of reality, and as such provoke a kind of metaphysical wonder. All these kinds of objects are suited to generate interest in a human being, but to call this relation to objects of study 'being interested in such and such' and to ascribe them all to 'curiosity' puts these objects on the same level as any others in which a person might be interested, and their study on the same level as curiosity about the private lives of actors and actresses. It is a matter of some significance that the disciplines are concerned with the various worlds or regions of worlds which are essential to man's being, or on

which his being depends, or which may shed light on the nature of his being, or which express his being with such force and comprehensiveness that they are essential for his self-understanding; and which reveal, also, that which is other than man but with which man is necessarily concerned, or upon which his well-being depends, or which is relevant to his well-being, as a valued or threatening part of his environment, or which is worthy of his care and attention for its own sake, or which claims his attention as having a being superior to his own. Aristotle does not justify *theoria* simply by reference to the satisfaction it affords, but on account of the dignity of its objects. Socrates and Plato, similarly, thought of the love of wisdom as concern with objects of the highest importance. Most people cannot put their heart into arduous enquiry for its own sake when they believe that the matter they are enquiring into is of little or no importance, and there is something tragi-comic about a person who expends his spirit enquiring into a matter of whose triviality he is unaware. All entirely satisfactory justification of education would take close account of all the factors which make participation in the pursuit of truth for its own sake worthwhile, its vital value and the importance attributed to the objects of which knowledge is sought, as well as its hedonic aspect and the rational values implicit in the concern for truth.

While it is not wrong to say that continuing the demanding pursuit of truth after education has been completed is valuable because it mitigates boredom, this justification trivialises what it justifies by reducing it to a pastime. A person may dabble in history or philosophy or literature, setting a very strict limit on the amount of pain he is prepared to endure. For him the pursuit of truth is a pastime, but it is unlikely to prove an effective safeguard against boredom. I suggest that what Peters really believes is that it is good for a human being to live keenly in the attribute of thought, and that no activity is so far removed from boredom as demanding intellectual activity, especially the demanding pursuit of truth. As an example of sheer concern for truth without regard for pleasure, Peters cites Socrates' willingness to teach young men – an activity which he believes Socrates may at times have found rather boring. But surely Socrates found teaching enjoyable on the whole. What makes the example significant is that teaching would not have stretched Socrates' mind; so perhaps Peters' real argument is that no matter how much pleasure Socrates was getting from teaching, his state must have been one of boredom to some degree, since when he was teaching rather than philosophizing he was not putting forth his intellectual powers to the full, and therefore was not so fully alive as a thinking being. Being bored is living at a low ebb, the opposite of living vigorously. If Peters believes that education should liberate and stimulate intellectual vitality, and that by the time education has been accomplished this vitality should be able to maintain itself without tutorial support, it is easy to see why he feels that perhaps the continuing practice of enquiry or other demanding intellectual pursuit for its own sake is a condition of educational success. His point of view does not communicate itself clearly because he assimilates the vital to the hedonic.

According to the view Peters expresses in his article, the chief value of participation

in enquiry during education is to be found in the values and procedures implicit in the concern for truth, to which great emphasis is given. This concern for truth is not the same as the concern for discovering the truth of the objects or matters enquired into. It is not what we ordinarily mean by 'love of knowledge', but more like love of intellectual probity. Peters attaches no value to it except in so far as it is active in accomplishing justification. Since by the time education is complete the learner has acquired intellectual probity, there is no further need for him to undertake demanding enquiry for its own sake for the sake of acquiring it. Consequently, the only possible justification for pursuing demanding enquiry for its own sake after education is the pleasure one gets from it, or rather, the relief from pain (boredom). Thus enquiry in an educational context is justified chiefly in one way, and enquiry carried on for its own sake outside education entirely in another. But certain major values of demanding enquiry performed for its own sake are the same whether enquiry is carried on in school or after leaving school; in particular, love of knowledge concerning matters of importance, and the vitally rewarding character of the quest for knowledge. Peters' virtual ignoring of these values accounts for a feeling of the absence of any dynamic element in his account of the pursuit of truth. It is as if an account of the rules which are logically necessary for any enquiry are presented as an account of the values of the experience of enquiry. Even the account of the hedonic aspect of enquiry represents it as little more than successful activity in accordance with these rules. An inadequate phenomenology affects even the most rigorous arguments, if they have phenomenological presuppositions.

Peters argues that the demand for justification is immanent in human life. Justification is defined as rational assessment which a person makes of his own beliefs, actions and feelings – hence a life of obedience to the demand for justification approximates to the Socratic ideal of self-examination. The practice of certain forms of knowledge and understanding is necessarily relevant to the assessment of beliefs etc., and some of the things known and understood are relevant to particular assessments. According to Peters this justifies the development of knowledge and understanding in education.

In ordinary contexts, justifying something is exhibiting sufficient grounds of its truth, rightness or appropriateness. People very often have an interest in justifying something, and no interest at all in discovering that it is false, wrong or inappropriate. Peters does not use 'justification' in this common way. In his view, justification is, among other things, rational assessment by an individual of his own beliefs, and since it is rational it is not partisan. Now, in the case of belief, what is assessed by the individual may be either the state of believing the proposition believed, relative to the grounds or other warrant which he has for believing it, or it may be the proposition believed, relative to the grounds which there are for its truth. Justification in the first, or weak, sense is more limited in scope than justification in the second, or strong, sense. Suppose I consider my belief that the angles of a triangle are together equal to

two right-angles, and discover that I have no ground for believing the proposition, or ground which is inadequate. I assess my belief as not justified by the grounds I possess; either the proposition is true or it is not, I do not know which. The demand for justification in the weak sense is now satisfied. I am aware of my ignorance about the quantity of the sum of the angles of a triangle, and have adjusted my cognitive attitude to the proposition accordingly. What I previously believed I am now doubtful about. I could justify all my beliefs, in this weak sense, abandoning any whose supposed grounds in fact prove the truth of their contradictories, and frankly admitting to myself that in many cases I do not have sufficient grounds for believing the propositions believed or for disbelieving them. I change my cognitive attitude to these propositions from belief to doubt. But I do not go on to try to discover what is true. For me to go on to enquire into the truth of the matters I am ignorant or uncertain about, something more is required than the weak demand for justification, which is only the demand that relative to any proposition towards which I have a cognitive attitude, I should have the cognitive attitude (belief, doubt or disbelief) which is appropriate to that proposition, relative to the grounds or other warrant (or lack of such) which I have for regarding it as true. On its own, the demand for justification in the weak sense is clearly insufficient to justify the educational development of knowledge and understanding.

If reason makes any stronger demand for justification it can hardly be less than an unlimited demand for the discovery of truth. What I have called 'justification in the strong sense', above, cannot be a demand of reason. Suppose I reflect on a belief and become aware that my grounds for it are insufficient. If I wish, I can go on to ask what further grounds there are for believing it, grounds which I do not yet possess. Suppose I discover that the proposition is false, though without thereby discovering what the truth of the matter is. The demand for justification in the strong sense would then be satisfied. But it would be strange for reason to demand that for each of my beliefs I should enquire into the proposition believed until I am properly satisfied whether it is true or false, yet neither permits me to break off the enquiry when I find my belief to be doubtful and have no interest in pursuing the matter further, or demand that if I find the proposition to be false, without thereby discovering the truth of the matter concerned, I should go on to discover what the truth of the matter is. Surely reason cannot make such an arbitrary demand? If I do proceed further with the enquiry, I shall no longer be assessing my original belief, or even trying to settle my doubt about it. I shall be trying to discover the truth about the particular matter, and to do that I may have to employ reason not merely critically but productively, by forming hypotheses, finding analogies, etc. Fresh occasions for assessment will arise, though in many cases not of beliefs, and in some cases not of my own beliefs but those of other persons which I entertain as possible solutions or steps towards the solution of the problem. The notion of justification, as Peters understands it, will have been left far behind. If reason makes a stronger demand for justification than the demand that a person's cognitive attitude to any proposition should be appropriate to the grounds he possesses,

it can hardly be less than an unlimited demand for knowledge, for it would be arbitrary for reason to demand that I should remedy my ignorance on every matter concerning which I have held a mistaken or ill-grounded belief, but not my ignorance on matters about which I have held no belief at all.

The demand for unlimited knowledge, were it a demand of reason, would be sufficient to justify not only the development of knowledge and understanding to the level required for a person to be educated, but also continuing in the demanding pursuit of truth after education is complete. But it cannot be represented as a demand of reason in the way that the demand for justification in the weak sense can. A demand to seek truth without limit is not written into human life: human life is intelligible without reference to it, and we do not expect everyone to seek truth without limit or consider him in the least irrational if he does not. Nor is the unlimited pursuit of truth what Socrates meant by self-examination. Socrates' pedagogic effort was directed at getting people to see that they believed certain things about the good on insufficient grounds, and to change their cognitive attitude to one of consciousness of their ignorance on this matter – an attainment of self-knowledge which if Socrates thought of it as the beginning of philosophy he did so because he believed that all men necessarily desire the good. He presupposed that his interlocutor had an interest in discovering the truth about a particular matter concerning which he had had a belief which he had justified in the weak sense (i.e. assessed as inappropriate). A presupposition that human beings have an interest in discovering the truth about all matters about which they have opinions would be mistaken, a presupposition that they have an unlimited interest in discovering the truth even more so. It seems that the most that reason could demand of the individual is that he should not believe anything unless he has grounds or other warrant for doing so, since belief is the attitude of mind appropriate to truth. This is only the weak demand for justification. It may be that there are certain things about which a human being cannot remain in a state of agnosticism but must have beliefs about, and that the demand to justify just these beliefs is sufficient to justify the development of knowledge and understanding to the degree necessary for a person to be an educated man. But this has not been shown. As it stands, Peters' non-instrumental justification is therefore incomplete.

Possibly, it is also incomplete in another respect. Peters' argument that justification cannot itself be seriously questioned may well be correct, since it denies the possibility of a *general* justification of justification, but this does not show that it would be pointless to ask for a justification of justification in particular cases, where, for example, justification would involve enquiries of a complex kind which would be prodigal of time and effort, or where justification might well have harmful consequences. We tend to presuppose that truth is compatible with welfare, but this is the case only if truth is always a condition of welfare, and that is the case only if we choose to think so. If belief is the attitude which is appropriate to truth, it is also the attitude which is appropriate to that towards which it is beneficial to adopt the attitude appropriate to

truth. Though it is epistemologically inappropriate to believe something without having grounds or other warrant for its being the case, it is pragmatically appropriate to believe it if doing so would be beneficial. Admittedly, if in a particular case objection were made to the justification of a belief on the ground that it would be inadvisable to justify it, a justification would have been provided for not justifying in that case, so it could still be said that the demand for justification is inescapable. But satisfying 'the demand for justification', when it concerns a belief, does not entail justifying the belief rather than merely the holding of the belief, and it should not be assumed that people who have been educated do not very often justify holding beliefs without justifying the beliefs themselves. Nor should it be assumed that in so far as they do this they are behaving irrationally, for they need not be.

A person might choose not to be very scrupulous concerning the truth of beliefs when he judges that holding them is beneficial or, perhaps more often, when he believes that not holding them would put him to considerable inconvenience or cause him trouble of some other sort. Furthermore, he might ask how far the activity of self-reflection is justified, and justify calling a halt to it when he judges it would be disadvantageous to him to take it any further. If it were said of him that he had not reflected adequately on the nature of the beneficial itself, he could answer that he knew sufficiently what he wanted from life, and that in his judgement it would be unwise for him to seek to know it any further. He might not be convinced that Socrates and others achieved anything worthwhile from taking reflection about the good to the extremes that they did.

This attitude is a common one, indeed one might call it the attitude of the average educated man. It does not involve a denial of the demand for justification. A philosophical account of education which connects education internally and very directly to the good life by means of the notion of justification, limited in the manner in which Peters limits it and left unlimited in the way that he leaves it unlimited, gets this average educated man as the outcome of education, and his life, which only very remotely approximates to the Socratic ideal, becomes for it the good life. The average educated man will have knowledge and understanding in various forms of knowledge, but as he is not committed to acquiring universal knowledge in the hope that it will be useful to him in his justifying, the amount of knowledge he possesses, and the degree of understanding, need be nothing out of the ordinary. Little more can be asked of him if he is not to lose his chief value, which is that of providing a standard which nearly all learners could attain. If they do attain it, their lives will be relatively free from subjection to sheer immediate passion and blind prejudice; they will be reasonable, and reflective – to a degree. The notion of the average educated man is a dispiriting, even though a realistic and essentially humane, aspect of Peters' account of education.

His account presents a very different aspect if we see an unlimited demand for truth as central to it, rather than merely the demand for justification. There are elements in his article which encourage this interpretation, especially his description of education as

an attempt to realize the Socratic ideal. But if demand for truth is taken as unlimited, then since truthfulness and sincerity are demands of reason, the good life will be too much like the life of Kierkegaard, who in writings like *Works of Love* demonstrated the extreme depth and complexity of the introspectible soul, and the correspondingly immense difficulty of achieving self-understanding, and therefore truthfulness and sincerity. The good life would also be too much like the life of the Platonic Socrates for, as well as truthfulness and sincerity, love of truth would involve an examination of the standards by which actions, beliefs, feelings and pattern of life were assessed, and a re-examination of the notion of truth itself – collectively an enterprise of enormous difficulty, since the demand is not merely to assess one's opinions on these matters, but to discover the very truth of them.

The good life would be dangerous as well as onerous. Peters says that to ask for the justification of the pattern of one's life is to ask for features internal to it which constitute reasons for pursuing it. But it is possible that no such reason would appear, because the reflection which bestows the freedom of detachment on the thinker will deprive what he reflects upon of value. He may then feel that whatever value a pattern of life has is not intrinsic to it, but is bestowed upon it by the person who lives it, and this belief may induce despair. According to the author of the pseudo-Platonic dialogue *Cleitophon,* the circularity of the account Socrates provided of the good drove his disciples to despair and caused them to abandon his teaching for hedonism. Peters' account of justification may have a somewhat similar power, for showing that no valid reason can be provided either for or against justification is not the same as justifying it. Salvation is not to be found in the thought that the values of reason are necessary features of human life, for that does nothing to demonstrate that the examined life is worth living, any more than the unexamined one.

I do not think it would be absurd to conceive education as education into despair, since, as Kierkegaard has stressed, despair is not necessarily a permanent or wholly unpromising state. The educated person who continues in the Socratic quest for truth and falls into despair may succeed in overcoming nihilism. Indeed, it is as if Peters' writings were based on just such an achievement: like Kant's practical philosophy, his philosophy of education will accept an existentialist interpretation. It even seems to demand such an interpretation, in so far as it conceives education as the beginning of the good life, and conceives the good life as involving commitment to an ideal.

However, unlimited concern for truth would not be confined to a Socratic quest for self-understanding which leads the individual on to philosophical enquiry into the nature of the good, but would take all categories of being as its objects. In the face of such an impossible demand, selection would be necessary and inevitable, and not every lover of truth would choose to live in the Socratic manner, making reflection on his own life and on the nature of the good life his chief concern. Nor is there any compelling reason why he should. The weakness of the Socratic position lies in its presupposition that the good life is a life spent in trying to find out what the good life is. This circularity

could be remedied by acknowledging that this self-reflective life may not be the good life, or not the only good life, and this would leave it open for us to conceive the good life in a more catholic, Aristotelian, fashion as one in which the thinking being directs his vitality to the pursuit of truth concerning sufficiently important matters. Now, since there are other matters of importance besides the nature of the good life, and since because of human finitude it is impossible to seek the truth concerning all matters of importance, the individual is free to make, say, the pursuit of truth concerning the physical world his most serious concern. Through his energetically pursuing this project, affectivity and imagination would become caught up in it and suffuse it with values which the domain of enquiry is capable of receiving and sustaining, so making it a main element in the good life for him. It is not suggested that he would not need to reflect on his pattern of life at all, but that in so far as this reflection concerned his adoption of scientific enquiry as a major part of his life, reflection might not need to be prolonged. He would be under no obligation to consider possible alternative patterns of life which might suit him even better, if this one was suiting him very well. In some matters he would have to live like the average educated man, but in those matters which fall within the scope of his most serious concern he would exhibit a concern for truth which far surpassed averageness. Problems would not be allowed to fall out of mind through the knowledge or fear that facing them would be embarrassing or distressing, feelings of disquiet would not be allowed sink away without elucidation of their cognitive import, factors having a bearing on a matter would not be ignored in obedience to merely conventional rules of relevance, and truth would not be reduced simply to conformity to what others were prepared to accept, neither grossly nor through a number of compliances which cumulatively had that effect.

From this more catholic conception of the good life, we can find our way back to the conception of education as primarily development of knowledge and understanding of matters of importance, including development through engaging in the vitally rewarding pursuit of truth for its own sake. Such an education might well begin and lead on to such a life. It remains the case, however, that the choice of love of truth as a superior or supreme value is only an existentialism. It cannot be justified in a way which would render it acceptable to every reasonable person, either by reference to the meaning of 'education' as the word is currently used, or in any other way.

The choice could be supported, nevertheless. It is hardly conceivable that a person would choose truth as such a superior value unless he already had at least an implicit conception of man as able to relate himself consciously to the world as it is, and to things as they are, and so have to do with the world and things as being awake rather than as being in a dream. If he feels that he must live in the truth, no matter how cheerless, rather than in a comfortable illusion, is this not the sense of an imperative or appeal, and if this imperative or appeal is not to be explained entirely in psychological terms, or as a demand which originates partly from his empirical nature and partly from initiation into forms of life by his elders, might it not have its source both in his

own being and in the being of the world of which he is both a part and a limit? To put it rather differently, is man not subject to a call both from his own being and the being of what-is to bring them out of darkness into the light of the intelligible? In some such way the metaphysical significance of the feeling of a demand, or something like a demand, to discover the truth of things might be elucidated, and could then be seen as the foundation of the choice of love of truth as a superior value. In the absence of an account of such a kind, the choice to love the truth must appear as ultimately wilful, since it will lack subjective grounds which can be recognized, by those prepared to put themselves imaginatively in the place of the lover of truth, as having a kind of hypothetical universal validity: if anyone sees human existence and the world as he does, it would be fitting for that person to choose love of truth as a basis of his life. Without a metaphysical account of the basis of love of truth the choice of it will not even be represented faithfully, since it is neither the choice to carry through a task to which a human being as such is already irrevocably committed, nor a psychological compulsion or a necessity of some other kind, nor a preference at the level of taste. What it is can only be communicated by extraordinary means, involving the use of imagination. But if the communication is not attempted, the lover of truth will find himself in the peculiar position of having, in the end, to condemn his own choice as arbitrary, yet at the same time of feeling that the choice rests on some ground which he cannot fathom and that his self-condemnation may therefore be unjust.

If education is described as primarily development of knowledge and understanding of matters of importance, including development through engagement in the vitally rewarding pursuit of truth, it would appear that the educators had a special commitment to the life of the intellect, and it would be very strange if contininuing engagement in the demanding pursuit of truth were not regarded, *prima facie,* as a condition of educational success. Important matters would not cease to be important just because the learner had completed his education, vitally rewarding activity would not cease to be vitally rewarding just at that time, and there would still be plenty of scope for development of knowledge and understanding. Continuing in the demanding pursuit of truth for its own sake would not be a condition of a person's being an educated man, however, for calling him an educated man indicates only that he has reached a certain level of attainment. If a person becomes an educated man, education will have been successful to a degree; it will not be entirely successful unless, in the absence of anything that prevents him, he continues with demanding intellectual activity for its own sake outside tutelage.

But the form of education described above is a relatively narrow one, and it could not be tied as closely to the notion of the good life as Peters would wish education to be. Educators who promote certain values above others which have an equal claim upon human beings cannot justly maintain that a successful education is the most appropriate preparation for the good life for any and every individual. It could be

argued that participation in demanding intellectual activity can be vitally rewarding for all learners, so that their experience of educational activities need not be judged unfavourably by them. Many teachers take it as a regulative principle that a learner will find the study of a discipline rewarding, provided he has a certain commitment to it, even if only a naive willingness to work; and provided that he does not, or does not too often, undertake tasks which are so far beyond his present capacity that he cannot hope to achieve a fair degree of success in them. They presuppose that, in the absence of any countervailing factor, vital fulfilment through intellectual activity is possible for everyone. The principle, though *a priori,* has a good deal of empirical support: good teachers are constantly working wonders with learners who seem at first to lack aptitude for disciplined study. Nevertheless, for persons of certain temperaments engagement in demanding intellectual activity for its own sake is not an element, or not an important element, in the sort of life which is most vitally rewarding for them. The educators would have to recognize that what they were justifying was not education itself, but a type of education which, so far as the good life is concerned, is more appropriate for some individuals than for others.

The function of the form of education described need not be conceived in the way I have conceived it, however. Its function could be thought to be that of producing persons who are practically wise, and this, on the most obvious and straightforward interpretation of his article, is what Peters takes the function of education to be. On this view, continuing with demanding intellectual activity for its own sake is *not* a condition of educational success, since it is not a condition of being practically wise.

Although the overt conception of a practically wise life as the main function of education is a new development in Peters' philosophy of education, the form of education he envisages is substantially the same as that described in his earlier writings. For the learner to become educated, development of knowledge and understanding is still required in breadth and depth. Any item of knowledge or degree of understanding might prove relevant to some justification, and the amount of knowledge and the degree of understanding thought necessary to equip a learner for the life of justification, if they are any different from those required for a person to be an educated man, are left unspecified. 'The Justification of Education' accomplishes a sort of compromise between education for the theoretical life and for the practical life. But the compromise is achieved chiefly by the ascription of a practical function to education, while the form of education remains such that education is likely to have outcomes such as love of knowledge, scholarship, etc., as by-products. It could be objected either that the form of education envisaged is not the most appropriate for the function ascribed to it, or that Peters denies full justice to the academic function which that form of education can also serve. It seems to me that because of the limitations of his concept of enquiry, and perhaps because of his conception of the duration of education, he has not been able both to show the great practical value of the development of concern for truth during the educational period, *and* to save the values of the pursuit of knowledge for

its own sake, despite a desire, evident in his paper, to do both of these things. As his justification stands, the first has been accomplished, but at the expense of the second.

In calling attention to what I originally described as an ambivalence in Peters' attitude to the academic disciplines, I have, in effect, been contrasting his earlier conception of education with a different conception which seems to be in the process of developing from it. It is to be hoped that what was perhaps the most important element in his earlier conception will not be excluded or lost from the new conception, or its importance diminished, and that an account of the metaphysical basis of truth as a superior or supreme value will in due course be provided. Also welcome would be a recognition of the vital as well as the hedonic values of the pursuit of truth, an adjustment of the present tendency to stress the rational character of enquiry while neglecting to stress the significance of the objects enquired into by the disciplines, and a closer consideration of the nature of the connection between education and the good life.

Note

1.   In Peters, R.S., (ed.) *The Philosophy of Education,* OUP, 1973 (reprinted in this volume, Paper 11(i)).

(i) LIBERAL EDUCATION AND THE NATURE OF KNOWLEDGE

Paul H. Hirst

The phrase 'liberal education' has today become something of a slogan which takes on different meanings according to its immediate context. It usually labels a form of education of which the author approves, but beyond that its meaning is often entirely negatively derived. Whatever else a liberal education is, it is *not* a vocational education, *not* an exclusively scientific education, or *not* a specialist education in any sense. The frequency with which the term is employed in this way certainly highlights the inadequacies of these other concepts and the need for a wider and, in the long run, more worthwhile form of education. But as long as the concept is merely negative in what it intimates, it has little more than debating value. Only when it is given explicit positive content can it be of use in the serious business of educational planning. It is my contention in this essay that whatever vagaries there have been in the use of the term, it is the appropriate label for a positive concept, that of an education based fairly and squarely on the nature of knowledge itself, a concept central to the discussion of education at any level.

The Greek notion of liberal education

The fully developed Greek notion of liberal education was rooted in a number of related philosophical doctrines: first about the significance of knowledge for the mind, and secondly about the relationship between knowledge and reality. In the first category there was the doctrine that it is the peculiar and distinctive activity of the mind, because of its very nature, to pursue knowledge. The achievement of knowledge satisfies and fulfils the mind, which thereby attains its own appropriate end. The pursuit of knowledge is thus the pursuit of the good of the mind and, therefore, an essential element in the good life. In addition, it was held that the achievement of knowledge is not only the attainment of the good of the mind itself, but also the chief means whereby the good life as a whole is to be found. Man is

more than pure mind, yet mind is his essential distinguishing characteristic, and it is in terms of knowledge that his whole life is rightly directed.

That knowledge is equal to its task was guaranteed by the second group of doctrines. These asserted that the mind, in the right use of reason, comes to show the essential nature of things and can apprehend what is ultimately real and immutable. Consequently, man no longer needs to live in terms of deceptive appearances and doubtful opinions and beliefs. All his experiences, life and thought can be given shape and perspective by what is finally true, by knowledge that corresponds to what is ultimately real. Further, the particular way in which reason is here represented as attaining knowledge results in a view of the whole of man's understanding as hierarchically structured in various levels. From the knowledge of mere particulars to that of pure being, all knowledge has its place in a comprehensive and harmonious scheme, the pattern of which is formed as knowledge is developed in apprehending reality in its many different manifestations.

From these doctrines there emerged the idea of liberal education as a process concerned simply and directly with the pursuit of knowledge. But the doctrines give to this general idea particular meaning and significance; for they lead to a clear definition of its scope and content, and to a clear justification for education in these terms. The definition is clear, because education is determined objectively in range, in structure and in content by the forms of knowledge itself and their harmonious, hierarchical interrelations. There is here no thought of defining education in terms of knowledge and skills that may be useful, or in terms of moral virtues and qualities of mind that may be considered desirable. The definition is stated strictly in terms of man's knowledge of what is the case. The development of the mind to which it leads, be it in skills, virtues or other characteristics, is thought to be necessarily its greatest good.

The justification that the doctrines lend to this concept of education is threefold. First, such an education is based on what is true and not on uncertain opinions and beliefs or temporary values. It therefore has a finality which no other form of education has. Secondly, knowledge itself being a distinctive human virtue, liberal education has a value for the person as the fulfilment of the mind, a value which has nothing to do with utilitarian or vocational considerations. Thirdly, because of the significance of knowledge in the determination of the good life as a whole, liberal education is essential to man's understanding of how he ought to live, both individually and socially.

Here, then, the Greeks attained the concept of an education that was 'liberal' not simply because it was the education of free men rather than slaves, but also because they saw it as freeing the mind to function according to its true nature, freeing reason from error and illusion and freeing man's conduct from wrong. And ever since Greek times this idea of education has had its place. Sometimes it has been modified or extended in detail to accommodate within its scheme new forms of knowledge: for instance Christian doctrines and the various branches of modern science. Sometimes the concept has been misinterpreted: as in Renaissance humanism, when classical learning was equated with liberal education. Sometimes it has been strongly opposed on philosophical

grounds: as by Dewey and the pragmatists. Yet at crucial points in the history of education the concept has constantly reappeared. It is not hard to understand why this should be so.

Education, being a deliberate, purposeful activity directed to the development of individuals, necessarily involves considerations of value. Where are these values to be found? What is to be their content? How are they to be justified? They can be, and often are, values that reflect the interests of a minority group in the society. They may be religious, political or utilitarian in character. They are always open to debate and detailed criticism, and are always in need of particular justification. Is there not perhaps a more ultimate basis for the values that should determine education, some more objective ground? That final ground has, ever since the Greeks, been repeatedly located in man's conception of the diverse forms of knowledge he has achieved. And there has thus arisen the demand for an education whose definition and justification are based on the nature and significance of knowledge itself, and not on the predilections of pupils, the demands of society, or the whims of politicians. Precisely this demand was behind the development by the Greeks of an education in the seven liberal arts, an introduction to and a pursuit of the forms of knowledge as they were then conceived. It was precisely this demand that prompted Newman and Arnold in the nineteenth century to call for an education that aimed at the cultivation and development of the mind in the full range of man's understanding. It is the same demand that today motivates such classical realists as Maritain and R.M. Hutchins.

A typical modern statement: the Harvard Report

It may well be asked, however, whether those who do not hold the doctrines of metaphysical and epistemological realism can legitimately subscribe to a concept of education of this kind. Historically it seems to have had positive force only when presented in this particular philosophical framework. But historical association must be distinguished from logical connection and it is not by any means obvious that all the characteristic features of the concept are dependent on such philosophical realism. If the doctrines about mind, knowledge and reality mentioned at the beginning of this paper are regarded as at best too speculative a basis for educational planning, as well they may be, the possibility of an education defined and justified entirely in terms of the scope and character of knowledge needs re-examination. The significance of the concept originally came directly from the place the basic doctrines give to knowledge in a unified picture of the mind and its relation to reality. Knowledge is achieved when the mind attains its own satisfaction or good by corresponding to objective reality. A liberal education in the pursuit of knowledge is, therefore, seeking the development of the mind according to what is quite external to it, the structure and pattern of reality. But if once there is any

serious questioning of this relationship between mind, knowledge and reality, the whole harmonious structure is liable to disintegrate. First there arise inevitably problems of definition. A liberal education defined in terms of knowledge alone is acceptable as long as knowledge is thought to be necessarily developing the mind in desirable ways, and hence promoting the good life. But if doubt is cast on these functions of knowledge, must not liberal education be redefined, stating explicitly the qualities of mind and the moral virtues to which it is directed? And if knowledge is no longer seen as the understanding of reality but merely as the understanding of experience, what is to replace the harmonious, hierarchical scheme of knowledge that gave pattern and order to the education? Secondly, there are equally serious problems of justification. For if knowledge is no longer thought to be rooted in some reality, or if its significance for the mind and the good life is questioned, what can be the justification for an education defined in terms of knowledge alone?

Difficulties of both kinds, but particularly those of definition, can be seen in the well-known Harvard Committee Report: *General Education in a Free Society*.[1] (In the committee's terminology the aims of a 'liberal' and a 'general' education are identical.) Though certain of the doctrines that originally supported the concept of a liberal education are implicit in this work, the classical view of the significance of knowledge for the mind is considerably weakened, and the belief that in metaphysics man has knowledge of ultimate reality is ignored, if not rejected. The result is an ambiguous and unsatisfactory treatment of the problem of definition and a limited and debatable treatment of the question of justification. Some examination of the report on both these scores, particularly the former, will serve to show that adequate definition and justification are not only not dependent on the classical doctrines, but can in fact be based directly on an explication of the concepts of 'mind' and 'knowledge' and their relationships.

The report attempts the definition of a liberal education in two distinct ways: in terms of the qualities of mind it ought to produce and the forms of knowledge with which it ought to be concerned. What the precise relationship is between these two is not clear. It is asserted that they are 'images of each other', yet that there is no escape from 'describing general education at one time looking to the good man in society and at another time as dictated by the nature of knowledge itself'.[2] Which of the forms of description is to be given pride of place soon emerges, however. First, three areas of knowledge are distinguished, primarily by their distinctive methods: the natural sciences, the humanities and social studies. But it is made plain that 'the cultivation of certain aptitudes and attitudes of mind' is being aimed at, the elements of knowledge being the means for developing these. Liberal education is therefore best understood in terms of the characteristics of mind to which it leads. 'By characteristics we mean aims so important as to prescribe how general education should be carried out and which abilities ought to be sought above all others in every part of it. These abilities in our opinion

are: to think effectively, to communicate thought, to make relevant judgments, to discriminate among values.'³ The meaning of each of these four is elaborated at some length. Amongst the many things detailed of 'effective thinking' it is first said to be logical thinking of a kind that is applicable to such practical matters as deciding who to vote for and what wife to choose: it is the ability to extract universal truths from particular cases and to infer particulars from general laws; it is the ability to analyse a problem and to recombine the elements by the use of imagination. This thinking goes further than mere logic, however. It includes the relational thinking of everyday life, the ability to think at a level appropriate to a problem whatever its character. It includes too the imaginative thinking of the poet, the inventor, and the revolutionary. 'Communication', though 'obviously inseparable from effective thinking', is said to involve another group of skills, those of speaking and listening, writing and reading. It includes certain moral qualities such as candour, it covers certain vital aspects of social and political life and even the high art of conversation. 'The making of relevant value judgments' involves 'the ability of the student to bring to bear the whole range of ideas upon the area of experience', it is the art of effectively relating theory to practice, abstractions to facts, thought to action. Finally there is 'discrimination among values'. This includes the distinction of various kinds of value and their relative importance, an awareness of the values of character like fair play and self-control, intellectual values like the love of truth and aesthetic values like good taste, and, in addition, a commitment to such values in the conduct of life.⁴

As to how exactly these abilities come to be those developed by the three types of knowledge, little is said. It is noted that 'the three phases of effective thinking, logical, relational, and imaginative, correspond roughly to the three divisions of learning, the natural sciences, the social studies, and the humanities, respectively'.⁵ The difficult connection between education in the making of value judgments and the formation of moral character is noted. Otherwise the remarks are of a general nature, emphasising that these abilities must be consciously developed in all studies and generalised as far as possible.

This double, if one-sided, characterisation of liberal education seems to me unsatisfactory and seriously misleading if what is said of the four abilities is examined more closely. In the first place, the notion that a liberal education can be directly characterised in terms of mental abilities, and independently of fully specifying the forms of knowledge involved, is I think false. It is the result of a misunderstanding of the way in which mental abilities are in fact distinguishable. From what is said of 'effective thinking', it is perfectly plain that the phrase is being used as a label for mental activity which results in an achievement of some sort, an achievement that is, at least in principle, both publicly describable and publicly testable – the solving of a mathematical problem, responsibly deciding who to vote for, satisfactorily analysing a work of art. Indeed there can be effective thinking only when the outcome of mental activity can be recognised and judged by those who have the appropriate skills and

knowledge, for otherwise the phrase has no significant application. Thus although the phrase labels a form of mental activity, and such mental processes may well be directly accessible only to the person whose processes they are, its description and evaluation must be in public terms occurring in public language. Terms which, like 'effective thinking', describe activities involving achievements of some sort, must have public criteria to mark them. But in that case, none of the four abilities can in fact be delineated except by means of their detailed public features. Such characterisation is in fact forced on the committee when it comes to amplify what it means. But its approach is simply illustrative, as if the abilities are directly intelligible in themselves, and the items and features of knowledge it gives merely examples of areas where the abilities can be seen. If the public terms and criteria are logically necessary to specifying what the abilities are, however, then no adequate account of liberal education in terms of these can be given without a full account in terms of the public features of the forms of knowledge with which it is concerned. Indeed the latter is logically prior and the former secondary and derivative.

In the second place, the use of broad, general terms for these abilities serves in fact to unify misleadingly quite disparate achievements. For the public criteria whereby the exercise of any one of these abilities is to be judged are not all of a piece. Those that under the banner of 'effective thinking' are appropriate in, say, aesthetic appreciation are, apart from certain very general considerations, inappropriate in, say, mathematical thinking. In each case the criteria are peculiar to the particular area of knowledge concerned. Similarly, for instance, 'communication' in the sciences has only certain very basic features in common with 'communication' in poetic terms. It is only when the abilities are fully divided out, as it were, into the various domains and we see what they refer to in public terms that it is at all clear what is involved in developing them. To talk of developing 'effective thinking' is like talking of developing 'successful games playing'. Plainly that unifying label is thoroughly misleading when what constitutes playing cricket has practically nothing in common with what constitutes playing tiddly-winks. The implications of the term are not at all appreciated until what is wanted is given detailed specification. It is vitally important to realise the very real objective differences that there are in forms of knowledge, and therefore in our understanding of mental processes that are related to these. Maybe this unfortunate desire to use unifying concepts is a relic of the time when all forms of knowledge were thought to be similar, if not identical, in logical structure and it was thought that the 'laws of logic' reflected the precise psychological operations involved in valid thinking. Be that as it may, the general terms used in the report are liable both to blur essential distinctions and to direct the attention of educational planners into unprofitable descriptions of what they are after.

Thirdly, in spite of any protestations to the contrary, the impression is created by this terminology that it is possible to develop general unitary abilities of the stated kind. The extent to which this is true is a matter for empirical investigation into the

transfer of training. Nevertheless such abilities must necessarily be characterised in terms of the public features of knowledge, and whatever general abilities there may be, the particular criteria for their application in diverse fields are vital to their significance for liberal education. But to think in these terms is to be in danger of looking for transfer of skills where none is discernible. We must not assume that skill at tiddly-winks will get us very far at cricket, or that if the skills have much in common, as in say squash and tennis, then rules for one activity will do as the rules for the other.

Failure to appreciate these points leads all too readily to programmes of education for which quite unwarranted claims are made. It is sometimes said, for instance, that the study of one major science can in itself provide the elements of a liberal education – that it can lead to the development of such abilities as effective thinking, communication, the making of relevant judgments, and even, to some extent, discrimination between values. But this facile view is seen to be quite untenable if it is once understood how these abilities are defined, and how any one form of knowledge is related to them. Much more plausible and much more common is the attempt to relate directly the study of particular subjects to the development of particular unitary abilities. The Harvard Committee does this with subdivisions of 'effective thinking' when it suggests that, roughly speaking, logical thinking is developed by the sciences, relational thinking by social studies, and imaginative thinking by the humanities. This, of course, could be said to be true by definition if logical thinking were taken to be just that kind of thinking that is developed by the study of the sciences. But such a straight and limited connection is not at all what is indicated in the report. The forms of thinking there are much more generalised. It follows then that logical, relational and imaginative thinking must be independently defined. Because of the vagueness of the terms it might appear that this would be simple enough. But in fact this very vagueness makes the task almost impossible, for any one of the three terms might, with considerable justice, be applied to almost any example of thinking. (And the appropriateness of using such a term as 'imaginative' to describe a distinct type of thinking rather than its manner or style is very debatable.) Even if these forms of thinking can be satisfactorily defined, it remains to be shown that each one of them demands the exercise of one distinct but general ability and that this ability can be developed by study in one particular area of human learning. Generally speaking there is little such evidence. What there is on transfer of training suggests that it occurs only where there is marked logical similarity in the elements studied.[6]

Finally, the characterisation of a liberal education in these terms is misleading owing to the tendency for the concept to be broadened so that it is concerned not only with the development of the mind that results from the pursuit of knowledge, but also with other aspects of personal development, particularly emotional and moral, that may or may not be judged desirable. This tendency can be clearly seen in the report's comments on the abilities of communication, making relevant judgments and discriminating between values. Stretching the edges of the concept in these ways leads to a much wider, more

generalised notion of education. It then ceases to be one defined directly in terms of the pursuit of knowledge as liberal education originally was, and thus cannot be justified by justifying that pursuit. But this is surely to give up the concept in favour of another one that needs independent justification. The analysis of such a concept is beyond our present concern.

A reassertion and a reinterpretation

On logical grounds, then, it would seem that a consistent concept of liberal education must be worked out fully in terms of the forms of knowledge. By these is meant, of course, not collections of information, but the complex ways of understanding experience which man has achieved, which are publicly specifiable and which are gained through learning. An education in these terms does indeed develop its related abilities and qualities of mind, for the mind will be characterised to a greater or lesser degree by the features of the understanding it seeks. Each form of knowledge, if it is to be acquired beyond a general and superficial level, involves the development of creative imagination, judgment, thinking, communicative skills, etc., in ways that are peculiar to itself as a way of understanding experience. To list these elements, picking them out, as it were, across the forms of knowledge of which they are part and in each of which they have a different stamp, draws attention to many features that a liberal education must of course include. But it draws attention to them at the expense of the differences between them as they occur in the different areas. And of itself such listing contributes nothing to the basic determination of what a liberal education is. To be told that it is the development of effective thinking is of no value until this is explicated in terms of the forms of knowlege which give it meaning: for example in terms of the solving of problems in Euclidean geometry or coming to understand the poems of John Donne. To be told instead that it is concerned with certain specified forms of knowledge, the essential characteristics of which are then detailed explicitly as far as possible, is to be given a clear understanding of the concept and one which is unambiguous as to the forms of thinking, judgment, imagination and communication it involves.

In his Gulbenkian Foundation Report *Arts and Science Sides in the Sixth Form,* Mr. A.D.C. Peterson comes considerably nearer than the Harvard Committee to the definition of a liberal education (once more termed here a 'general education') by proceeding in just this fashion. Being concerned that this should not be worked out in terms of information, he shies away from any direct use of the term 'knowledge' and defines the concept modestly as one that 'develops the intellect in as many as possible of the main modes of thinking'.[7] These are then listed as the logical, the empirical, the moral and the aesthetic. The phrase 'modes of thinking', it is true, refers directly to forms of mental activity, and Mr Peterson's alternatives for it, 'modes of human

experience', 'categories of mental experience' and (elsewhere) 'types of judgment', all look in the same direction. Yet the 'modes' are not different aspects of mind that cut across the forms that human knowledge takes, as the Harvard Report's 'abilities' are. They are, rather, four parallel forms of mental development. To complete this treatment so that there is no ambiguity, however, it must be made clear, in a way that Mr Peterson does not make it clear, that the four forms can only be distinguished, in the last analysis, in terms of the public features that demarcate the areas of knowledge on which they stand. Logical, empirical, moral and aesthetic forms of understanding are distinguishable from each other only by their distinctive concepts and expressions and their criteria for distinguishing the true from the false, the good from the bad. If Mr Peterson's 'modes' are strictly explicated on the basis of these features of knowledge, then his concept of education becomes one concerned with the development of the mind as that is determined by certain forms of knowledge. This is to be in sight of a modern equivalent of the traditional conception of liberal education.

But the reassertion of this concept implies that there is once more the acceptance of some kind of 'harmony' between knowledge and the mind. This is, however, not now being maintained on metaphysical grounds. What is being suggested, rather, is that the 'harmony' is a matter of the logical relationship between the concept of 'mind' and the concept of 'knowledge', from which it follows that the achievement of knowledge is necessarily the development of mind – that is, the self-conscious rational mind of man – in its most fundamental aspect.

Whatever else is implied in the phrase, to have 'a rational mind' certainly implies experience structured under some form of conceptual scheme. The various manifestations of consciousness, in, for instance, different sense perceptions, different emotions, or different elements of intellectual understanding, are intelligible only by virtue of the conceptual apparatus by which they are articulated. Further, whatever private forms of awareness there may be, it is by means of symbols, particularly in language, that conceptual articulation becomes objectified, for the symbols give public embodiment to the concepts. The result of this is that men are able to come to understand both the external world and their own private states of mind in common ways, sharing the same conceptual schemata by learning to use symbols in the same manner. The objectification of understanding is possible because commonly accepted criteria for using the terms are recognised even if these are never explicitly expressed. But further, as the symbols derived from experience can be used to examine subsequent experience, assertions are possible which are testable as true or false, valid or invalid. There are thus also public criteria whereby certain forms of expression are assessable against experience. Whether the 'objects' concerned are themselves private to the individual like mental processes, or publicly accessible like temperature readings, there are here tests for the assertions which are themselves publicly agreed and accepted.

It is by the use of such tests that we have come to have the whole domain of knowledge. The formulating and testing of symbolic expressions has enabled man to

probe his experience for ever more complex relations and for finer and finer distinctions, these being fixed and held for public sharing in the symbolic systems that have been evolved. But it is important to realise that this progressive attainment of a cognitive framework with public criteria has significance not merely for knowledge itself, for it is by its terms that the life of man in every particular is patterned and ordered. Without its structure all other forms of consciousness, including, for example, emotional experiences, or mental attitudes and beliefs, would seem to be unintelligible. For the analysis of them reveals that they lack independent intelligible structure of themselves. Essentially private though they may be in many or all of their aspects, their characteristic forms are explicable only by means of the publicly rooted conceptual organisations we have achieved. They can be understood only by means of the objective features with which they are associated, round which they come to be organised and built. The forms of knowledge are thus the basic articulations whereby the whole of experience has become intelligible to man; they are the fundamental achievement of mind.

Knowledge, however, must never be thought of merely as vast bodies of tested symbolic expressions. These are only the public aspects of the ways in which human experience has come to have shape. They are significant because they are themselves the objective elements round which the development of mind has taken place. To acquire knowledge is to become aware of experience as structured, organised and made meaningful in some quite specific way, and the varieties of human knowledge constitute the highly developed forms in which man has found this possible. To acquire knowledge is to learn to see, to experience the world in a way otherwise unknown, and thereby come to have a mind in a fuller sense. It is not that the mind is some kind of organ or muscle with its own inbuilt forms of operation which, if somehow developed, naturally lead to different kinds of knowledge. It is not that the mind has predetermined patterns of functioning. Nor is it that the mind is an entity which suitably directed by knowledge comes to take on the pattern of, is conformed to, some external reality. It is rather that to have a mind basically involves coming to have experience articulated by means of various conceptual schemata. It is only because man has over millennia objectified and progressively developed these that he has achieved the forms of human knowledge and the possibility of the development of mind as we know it is open to us today.

A liberal education is, then, one that, determined in scope and content by knowledge itself, is thereby concerned with the development of mind. The concept is thus once more clearly and objectively defined in precisely the same way as the original concept. It is however no longer supported by epistemological and metaphysical doctrines that result in a hierarchical organisation of the various forms of knowledge. The detailed working out of the education will therefore be markedly different in certain respects. The distinctions between the various forms of knowledge which will principally govern the scheme of education will now be based entirely on analyses of their particular conceptual, logical and methodological features. The comprehensive character of the

education will of course remain, since this is essentially part of the definition of the concept, but any question of the harmonious organisation of its various elements will depend on the relationships between them that are revealed by these analyses.

But if the concept is reasserted in these terms, what now of the question of its justification? The justification of a liberal education as supported by the doctrines of classical realism was based on the ultimacy of knowledge as ordered and determined by reality, and the significance of knowledge for the mind and for the good life. Having weakened these doctrines, the Harvard Committee's justification of the concept ignores the question of the relationship between knowledge and reality, and there is a specific rejection of the view that knowledge is in itself the good of the mind. It asserts, however, the supreme significance of knowledge in the determination of all human activity, and supplements this, as is certainly necessary because of the extended nature of the concept, by general considerations of the desirability of its suggestions. When once more the concept is strictly confined so as to be determined by the forms of knowledge, the return to a justification of it without reference to what is generally thought desirable on social or similar grounds becomes possible. And such justification for the concept is essential if the education it delineates is to have the ultimate significance that, as was earlier suggested, is part of its *raison d'être.* This justification must now however stem from what has already been said of the nature of knowledge, as no metaphysical doctrine of the connection between knowledge and reality is any longer being invoked.

If the achievement of knowledge is necessarily the development of mind in its most basic sense, then it can be readily seen that to ask for a justification for the pursuit of knowledge is not at all the same thing as to ask for the justification for, say, teaching all children a foreign language or making them orderly and punctual in their behaviour. It is in fact a peculiar question asking for justification for any development of the rational mind at all. To ask for the justification of any form of activity is significant only if one is in fact committed already to seeking rational knowledge. To ask for a justification of the pursuit of rational knowledge itself therefore presupposes some form of commitment to what one is seeking to justify. Justification is possible only if what is being justified is both intelligible under publicly rooted concepts and is assessable according to accepted criteria. It assumes a commitment to these two principles. But these very principles are in fact fundamental to the pursuit of knowledge in all its forms, be it, for instance, empirical knowledge or understanding in the arts. The forms of knowledge are in a sense simply the working out of these general principles in particular ways. To give justification of any kind of knowledge therefore involves using the principles in one specific form to assess their use in another. Any particular activity can be examined for its rational character, for its adherence to these principles, and thus justified on the assumption of them. Indeed in so far as activities are rational this will be possible. It is a commitment to them that characterises any rational activity as such. But the principles themselves have no such assessable status, for justification outside the use of the principles is not logically possible. This does not mean that

rational pursuits in the end lack justification, for they could equally well be said to have their justification written into them. Nor is any form of viciously circular justification involved by assuming in the procedure what is being looked for. The situation is that we have here reached the ultimate point where the question of justification ceases to be significantly applicable. The apparent circularity is the result of the interrelation between the concepts of rational justification and the pursuit of knowledge.

Perhaps the finality of these principles can be brought out further by noting a negative form of the same argument. From this point of view, to question the pursuit of any kind of rational knowledge is in the end self-defeating, for the questioning itself depends on accepting the very principles whose use is finally being called in question.

It is because it is based on these ultimate principles that characterise knowledge itself and not merely on lower level forms of justification that a liberal education is its a very real sense the ultimate form of education. In spite of the absence of any metaphysical doctrine about reality this idea of liberal education has a significance parallel to that of the original Greek concept. It is an education concerned directly with the development of the mind in rational knowledge, whatever form that freely takes. This parallels the original concept in that according to the doctrine of function liberal education was the freeing of the mind to achieve its own good in knowledge. In each case it is a form of education knowing no limits other than those necessarily imposed by the nature of rational knowledge and thereby itself developing in man the final court of appeal in all human affairs.

As here reformulated, the concept has, again like the original, objectivity, though this is no longer backed by metaphysical realism. For it is a necessary feature of knowledge as such that there be public criteria whereby the true is distinguishable from the false, the good from the bad, the right from the wrong. It is the existence of these criteria which gives objectivity to knowledge; and this in its turn gives objectivity to the concept of liberal education. A parallel to another form of justification thus remains, and the concept continues to warrant its label as that of an education that frees the mind from error and illusion. Further, as the determination of the good life is now considered to be itself the pursuit of a particular form of rational knowledge, that in which what ought to be done is justified by the giving of reasons, this is seen as a necessary part of a liberal education. And as all other forms of knowledge contribute in their way to moral understanding, the concept as a whole is once more given a kind of justification in its importance for the moral life. But this justification, like that of objectivity, no longer has the distinct significance which it once had, for it is again simply a necessary consequence of what the pursuit of knowledge entails. Nevertheless, liberal education remains basic to the freeing of human conduct from wrong.

Certain basic philosophical considerations

Having attempted a reinstatement of the concept without its original philosophical backing, what of the implications of this for the practical conduct of education? In working these out it is necessary first to try to distinguish the various forms of knowledge and then to relate them in some way to the organisation of the school or college curriculum. The first of these is a strictly philosophical task. The second is a matter of practical planning that involves many considerations other than the purely philosophical, and to this I will return when certain broad distinctions between the forms of knowledge have been outlined.

As stated earlier, by a form of knowledge is meant a distinct way in which our experience becomes structured round the use of accepted public symbols. The symbols thus having public meaning, their use is in some way testable against experience and there is the progressive development of series of tested symbolic expressions. In this way experience has been probed further and further by extending and elaborating the use of the symbols and by means of these it has become possible for the personal experience of individuals to become more fully structured, more fully understood. The various forms of knowledge can be seen in low-level developments within the common area of our knowledge of the everyday world. From this there branch out the developed forms which, taking certain elements in our common knowledge as a basis, have grown in distinctive ways. In the developed forms of knowledge the following related distinguishing features can be seen:

1.   They each involve certain central concepts that are peculiar in character to the form. For example, those of gravity, acceleration, hydrogen, and photosynthesis characteristic of the sciences; number, integral and matrix in mathematics; God, sin and predestination in religion; ought, good and wrong in moral knowledge.

2.   In a given form of knowledge these and other concepts, which denote, if perhaps in a very complex way, certain aspects of experience, form a network of possible relationships in which experience can be understood. As a result the form has a distinctive logical structure. For example, the terms and statements of mechanics can be meaningfully related in certain strictly limited ways only, and the same is true of historical explanation.

3.   The form, by virtue of its particular terms and logic, has expressions or statements (possibly answering a distinctive type of question) that in some way or other, however indirect it may be, are testable against experience. This is the case in scientific knowledge, moral knowledge, and in the arts, though in the arts no questions are explicit and the criteria for the tests are only partially expressible in words. Each form, then, has distinctive expressions that are testable against expe-

rience in accordance with particular criteria that are peculiar to the form.

4.   The forms have developed particular techniques and skills for exploring experience and testing their distinctive expressions, for instance the techniques of the sciences and those of the various literary arts. The result has been the amassing of all the symbolically expressed knowledge that we now have in the arts and the sciences.

Though the various forms of knowledge are distinguishable in these ways it must not be assumed that all there is to them can be made clear and explicit by these means. All knowledge involves the use of symbols and the making of judgments in ways that cannot be expressed in words and can only be learnt in a tradition. The art of scientific investigation and the development of appropriate experimental tests, the forming of an historical explanation and the assessment of its truth, the appreciation of a poem: all of these activities are high arts that are not in themselves communicable simply by words. Acquiring knowledge of any form is therefore to a greater or lesser extent something that cannot be done simply by solitary study of the symbolic expression of knowledge, it must be learnt from a master on the job. No doubt it is because the forms require particular training of this kind in distinct worlds of discourse, because they necessitate the development of high critical standards according to complex criteria, because they involve our coming to look at experience in particular ways, that we refer to them as disciplines. They are indeed disciplines that form the mind.

Yet the dividing lines that can be drawn between different disciplines by means of the four suggested distinguishing marks are neither clear enough nor sufficient for demarcating the whole world of modern knowledge as we know it. The central feature to which they point is that the major forms of knowledge, or disciplines, can each be distinguished by their dependence on some particular kind of test against experience for their distinctive expressions. On this ground alone, however, certain broad divisions are apparent. The sciences depend crucially on empirical experimental and observational tests; mathematics depends on deductive demonstrations from certain sets of axioms. Similarly moral knowledge and the arts involve distinct forms of critical tests though in these cases both what the tests are and the ways in which they are applied are only partially statable. (Some would in fact dispute the status of the arts as a form of knowledge for this very reason.) Because of their particular logical features it seems to me necessary to distinguish also as separate disciplines both historical and religious knowledge, and there is perhaps an equally good case, because of the nature of their central concepts, for regarding the human sciences separately from the physical sciences. But within these areas further distinctions must be made. These are usually the result of the groupings of knowledge round a number of related concepts, or round particular skills or techniques. The various sciences and the various arts can be demarcated within the larger units, of which they are in varying degrees representative in their structure,

by these means.

But three other important classifications of knowledge must in addition be recognised. First, there are those organisations which are not themselves disciplines or subdivisions of any discipline. They are formed by building together round specific objects, or phenomena, or pratical pursuits, knowledge that is characteristically rooted elsewhere in more than one discipline. It is not just that these organisations make use of several forms of knowledge, for after all the sciences use mathematics, the arts use historical knowledge and so on. Many of the disciplines borrow from each other. But these organisations are not concerned, as the disciplines are, to validate any one logically distinct form of expression. They are not concerned with developing a particular structuring of experience. They are held together simply by their subject matter, drawing on all forms of knowledge that can contribute to them. Geography, as the study of man in relation to his environment, is an example of a theoretical study of this kind, engineering an example of a practical nature. I see no reason why such organisations of knowledge, which I shall refer to as 'fields', should not be endlessly constructed according to particular theoretical or practical interests. Second, whilst moral knowledge is a distinct form, concerned with answering questions as to what ought to be done in practical affairs, no specialised subdivisions of this have been developed. In practical affairs, moral questions, because of their character, naturally arise alongside questions of fact and technique, so that there have been formed 'fields' of practical knowledge that include distinct moral elements within them, rather than the subdivisions of a particular discipline. Political, legal and educational theory are perhaps the clearest examples of fields where moral knowledge of a developed kind is to be found. Third, there are certain second-order forms of knowledge which are dependent for their existence on the other primary areas. On the one hand there are the essentially scientific studies of language and symbolism as in grammar and philology. On the other hand there are the logical and philosophical studies of meaning and justification. These would seem to constitute a distinct discipline by virtue of their particular concepts and criteria of judgment.

In summary, then, it is suggested that the forms of knowledge as we have them can be classified as follows:

1. Distinct disciplines or forms of knowledge (subdivisible): mathematics, physical sciences, human sciences, history, religion, literature and the fine arts, philosophy.
2. Fields of knowledge: theoretical, practical (these may or may not include elements of moral knowledge).

It is the distinct disciplines that basically constitute the range of unique ways we have of understanding experience if to these is added the category of moral knowledge.

The planning and practical conduct of liberal education

Turning now to the bearing of this discussion on the planning and conduct of a liberal education, certain very general comments about its characteristic features can be made, though detailed treatment would involve psychological and other considerations that are quite beyond the scope of this essay.

In the first place, as liberal education is concerned with the comprehensive development of the mind in acquiring knowledge, it is aimed at achieving an understanding of experience in many different ways. This means the acquisition by critical training and discipline not only of facts but also of complex conceptual schemes and of the arts and techniques of different types of reasoning and judgment. Syllabuses and curricula cannot therefore be constructed simply in terms of information and isolated skills. They must be constructed so as to introduce pupils as far as possible into the interrelated aspects of each of the basic forms of knowledge, each of the several disciplines. And they must be constructed to cover at least in some measure the range of knowledge as a whole.

In a programme of liberal education that is based directly on the study of the specific disciplines, examples of each of the different areas must of course be chosen. Selection of this kind is not however simply an inevitable practical consequence of the vast growth of knowledge. It is equally in keeping with what a liberal education is aiming at. Though its aim is comprehensive it is not after the acquistion of encyclopaedic information. Nor is it after the specialist knowledge of the person fully trained in all the particular details of a branch of knowledge. Such a specialist can not only accurately employ the concepts, logic and criteria of a domain but also knows the skills and techniques involved in the pursuit of knowledge quite beyond the immediate areas of common human experience. Nor is liberal eduation concerned with the technician's knowledge of the detailed application of the disciplines in practical and theoretical fields. What is being sought is, first, sufficient immersion in the concepts, logic and criteria of the discipline for a person to come to know the distinctive way in which it 'works' by pursuing these in particular cases; and then sufficient generalisation of these over the whole range of the discipline so that his experience begins to be widely structured in this distinctive manner. It is this coming to look at things in a certain way that is being aimed at, not the ability to work out in minute particulars all the details that can be in fact discerned. It is the ability to recognise empirical assertions or aesthetic judgments for what they are, and to know the kind of considerations on which their validity will depend, that matters. Beyond this an outline of the major achievements in each area provides some grasp of the range and scope of experience that has thus become intelligible. Perhaps this kind of understanding is in fact most readily distinguishable in the literary arts as critical appreciation in contrast to the achievement of the creative writer or the literary hack. But the distinction is surely applicable to

other forms of knowledge as well.

This is not to assert that 'critical' appreciation in any form of knowledge can be adequately achieved without some development of the understanding of the specialist or technician. Nor is it to imply that this understanding in the sciences, the arts or moral issues can be had without participation in many relevant creative and practical pursuits. The extent to which this is true will vary from discipline to discipline and is in fact in need of much investigation, particularly because of its importance for moral and aesthetic education. But it is to say that the aim of the study of a discipline in liberal education is not that of its study in a specialist or technical course. The first is concerned with developing a person's ways of understanding experience; the others are concerned with mastering the details of knowledge, how it is established, and the use of it in other enterprises, particularly those of a practical nature. It is of course perfectly possible for a course in physics, for example, to be devoted to a double purpose if it is deliberately so designed. It may provide both a specialist knowledge of the subject and at the same time a genuine introduction to the form of scientific knowledge. But the two purposes are quite distinct and there is no reason to suppose that by aiming at one the other can automatically be achieved as well. Yet it would seem to be true that some specialist study within a discipline, if it is at all typical of the discipline, is necessary to understanding the form of knowledge in any developed sense. The study of a discipline as part of liberal education, however, contributes practically nothing directly to any specialist study of it, though it does serve to put the specialism into a much wider context.

A liberal education approached directly in terms of the disciplines will thus be composed of the study of at least paradigm examples of all the various forms of knowledge. This study will be sufficiently detailed and sustained to give genuine insight so that pupils come to think in these terms, using the concepts, logic and criteria accurately in the different domains. It will then include generalisation of the particular examples used so as to show the range of understanding in the various forms. It will also include some indication of the relations between the forms where these overlap and their significance in the major fields of knowledge, particularly the practical fields, that have been developed. This is particularly important for moral education, as moral questions can frequently be solved only by calling on the widest possible range of human understanding. As there is in fact no developed discipline of moral knowledge, education in moral understanding must necessarily be approached in a rather different way. For if it is to cover more than everyday personal matters this has to be by the study of issues that occur in certain particular fields of knowledge. The major difficulty this presents will be referred to briefly later. The important point here is that though moral understanding has to be pursued in contexts where it is not the only dominant interest, the aim of its pursuit is precisely the same as for all other elements in a liberal education, the understanding of experience in a unique way. What is wanted (just as in the study of the disciplines *per se*) is, basically, the use of the appropriate concepts,

logic, and criteria, and the appreciation of the range of understanding in this form.

It is perhaps important to stress the fact that this education will be one in the forms of knowledge themselves and not merely a self-conscious philosophical treatment of their characteristics. Scientific and historical knowledge are wanted, not knowledge of the philosophy of science and the philosophy of history as substitutes. A liberal education can only be planned if distinctions in the forms of knowledge are clearly understood, and that is a philosophical matter. But the education itself is only partly in philosophy, and that is only possible when pupils have some grasp of the other disciplines themselves.

Precisely what sections of the various disciplines are best suited to the aims of liberal education cannot be gone into here. It is apparent that on philosophical grounds alone some branches of the sciences, for instance, would seem to be much more satisfactory as paradigms of scientific thinking than others. Many sections of physics are probably more comprehensive and clear in logical character, more typical of the well-developed physical sciences than, say, botany. If so, they would, all other things being equal, serve better as an introduction to scientific knowledge. Perhaps in literature and the fine arts the paradigm principle is less easy to apply though probably many would favour a course in literature to any one other. But whatever the discipline, in practice all other things are not in fact equal and decisions about the content of courses cannot be taken without careful regard to the abilities and interests of the students for whom they are designed.

Yet hovering round such decisions and questions of syllabus planning there is frequently found the belief that the inherent logical structure of a discipline, or a branch of a discipline, necessarily determines exactly what and exactly how the subject is to be taught and learnt. The small amount of truth and the large amount of error in this belief can only be distinguished by clarifying what the logic of a subject is. It is not a series of intellectual steps that must be climbed in strict order. It is not a specific psychological channel along which the mind must travel if there is to be understanding. This is to confuse logical characteristics with psychological processes. The logic of a form of knowledge shows the meaningful and valid ways in which its terms and criteria are used. It constitutes the publicly accepted framework of knowledge. The psychological activities of the individual when concerned with this knowledge are not in general prescribed in any temporal order and the mind, as it were, plays freely within and around the framework. It is simply that the framework lays down the general formal relations of the concepts if there is to be knowledge. The logic as publicly expressed consists of the general and the formal principles to which the terms must conform in knowledge. Coming to understand a form of knowledge involves coming to think in relations that satisfy the public criteria. How the mind plays round and within these is not itself being laid down at all; there is no dragooning of psychological processes, only a marking down of the territory in which the mind can wander more or less at will. Indeed understanding a form of knowledge is far more like coming to know

a country than climbing a ladder. Some places in a territory may only be get-at-able by a single specified route and some forms of knowledge may have concepts and relations that cannot be understood without first understanding certain others. But that countries are explorable only in one way is in general false, and even in mathematics, the most strictly sequential form of knowledge we have, many ways of coming to know the territory are possible. The logic of a subject is relevant to what is being taught, for its patterns must be accepted as essential to the form of knowledge. But how those patterns are best discerned is a matter for empirical investigation.

School subjects in the disciplines as we at present have them are in no way sacrosanct on either logical or psychological grounds. They are necessarily selections from the forms of knowledge that we have and may or may not be good as introductions for the purposes of liberal education. In most cases they have developed under a number of diverse influences. The historical growth of the subjects has sometimes dominated the programmes. The usefulness of certain elements, the demands of higher specialist education, certain general 'psychological' principles such as progressing from the simple to the complex, from the particular to the general, the concrete to the abstract: all these factors and many others have left their marks. This being so, many well-established courses need to be critically re-examined both philosophically and psychologically before they can be accepted as suitable for liberal education. Superficially at least most of them would seem to be quite inappropriate for this purpose.

Though a liberal education is most usually approached directly in the study of various branches of the disciplines, I see no reason to think that this must necessarily be so. It is surely possible to construct programmes that are in the first place organised round certain fields of knowledge either theoretical or practical. The study of aspects of power, natural as well as social and political, might for instance be one element in such a scheme; or a regional study that introduces historical, geographical, industrial and social considerations; or a practical project of design and building involving the sciences, mathematics and visual arts. In this case, however, it must be recognised that the fields are chosen because together they can be used to develop understanding of all the various forms of knowledge, and explicit steps must be taken to see that this end is achieved. There will necessarily be the strongest tendency for liberal education to be lost sight of and for the fields to be pursued in their own right developing the techniques and skills which they need. These may be valuable and useful in many ways, and perhaps essential in many a person's whole education. (Certainly liberal education as is here being understood is only one part of the education a person ought to have, for it omits quite deliberately for instance specialist eduation, physical education and character training.) But a course in various fields of knowledge will not in fact be a liberal education unless that aim is kept absolutely clear and every opportunity is taken to lead to a fuller grasp of the disciplines. Again some fields of study will be better for this purpose than others but all will demand the highest skill from the teacher, who must be under no misapprehension as to what the object of the exercise really is.

Yet it is difficult to see how this kind of approach can be fully adequate if it does not in the end lead to a certain amount of study of the distinct disciplines themselves. For whatever ground may have been covered indirectly, a satisfactory understanding of the characteristically distinct approaches of the different forms is hardly possible without some direct gathering together of the elements of the disciplines that have been implicit in all that has been done.

Whatever the pattern of a liberal education in its later stages, it must not be forgotten that there is being presupposed a broad basic education in the common area of everyday knowledge, where the various disciplines can be seen in embryo and from which they branch out as distinct units. In such a basic primary education, the ever growing range of a child's experience and the increasing use of linguistic and symbolic forms lays the foundation for the various modes of understanding, scientific, historical, religious, moral, and so on. Out of this general pool of knowledge the disciplines have slowly become ever more differentiated and it is this that the student must come to understand, not confusing the forms of knowledge but appreciating them for what they are in themselves, and recognising their necessary limitations.

But is then the outcome of a liberal education to be simply the achievement of a series of discrete ways of understanding experience? In a very real sense yes, but in another sense not entirely. For one thing, we have as yet not begun to understand the complex interrelations of the different forms of knowledge themselves, for they do not only have unique features but common features too, and in addition one discipline often makes extensive use of the achievements of another. But we must also not forget that the various forms are firmly rooted in that common world of persons and things which we all share, and into this they take back in subtle as well as simple ways the understanding they have achieved. The outcome of a liberal education must therefore not be thought of as producing ever greater disintegration of the mind but rather the growth of ever clearer and finer distinctions in our experience. If the result is not some quasi-aesthetic unity of the mind neither is it in any sense chaos. Perhaps the most suggestive picture of the outcome is that used by Professor Michael Oakeshott, though for him it has more literal truth than is here intended. In this the various forms of knowledge are seen as voices in a conversation, a conversation to which they each contribute in a distinctive way. If taken figuratively, his words express more succinctly than mine can precisely what it seems to me a liberal education is and what its outcome will be.

> As civilised human beings, we are the inheritors, neither of an inquiry about ourselves and the world, nor of an accumulating body of information, but of a conversation, begun in the primeval forests and extended and made more articulate in the course of centuries. It is a conversation which goes on both in public and within each of ourselves. Of course there is argument and inquiry and information,

but wherever these are profitable they are to be recognized as passages in this conversation, and perhaps they are not the most captivating of the passages . . . . Conversation is not an enterprise designed to yield an extrinsic profit, a contest where a winner gets a prize, nor is it an activity of exegesis; it is an unrehearsed intellectual adventure . . . . Education, properly speaking, is an initiation into the skill and partnership of this conversation in which we learn to recognize the voices, to distinguish the proper occasions of utterance, and in which we acquire the intellectual and moral habits appropriate to conversation. And it is this conversation which, in the end, gives place and character to every human activity and utterance.[8]

Notes

1. *General Education in a Free Society*: Report of the Harvard Committee, Oxford University Press, 1946.

2. *Ibid.,* p. 58.

3. *Ibid.,* pp. 64–5.

4. *Ibid.,* pp. 65–73.

5. *Ibid.,* p. 67.

6. Precisely the same criticisms might be made of some remarks by Professor P.H. Nowell-Smith in his inaugural lecture, *Education in a University* (Leicester University Press, 1958), pp. 6–11. In these he suggests that the prime purpose of the study of literature, history and philosophy is that each develops one of the central powers of the mind – creative imagination, practical wisdom, and logical thought. Once more we are up against the question of the definition of these 'powers' and if that problem can be solved, the question of sheer evidence for them and the way they can be developed.

7. *Arts and Science Sides in the Sixth Form*: Gulbenkian Foundation Report, Oxford University Department of Education. 1960, p. 15.

8. Michael Oakeshott, *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays,* Methuen, 1962, pp. 198–9.

12

(ii) NEEDED: A NEW PARADIGM FOR LIBERAL EDUCATION

Jane Roland Martin

The forms of knowledge theory

Curriculum, in the sense of decision making about what should be learned, is here to stay. There was a time in the late 1960s and early 1970s when its disappearance was momentarily expected. But in fact, even if the educational reforms proposed during those years had been generally adopted, curriculum would not have vanished. It was thought that it would disappear if students were in charge of their own learning; it was not realized that curriculum need not be compulsory and does not require for its survival that some knowledge be essential for all. It was thought that it would disappear once we deschooled society; it was not realized that curriculum can outlive schools. So long as people try to educate one another, or even simply themselves, decisions about what is to be learned will remain a central fact of life.

I draw attention to the persistent character of curriculum because educational fashions change so quickly. As I write, discussions of the basics, of liberal education, of minimal competency testing – all of them in large part discussions of curriculum – are in the news. By the time this is read, educational issues with less obvious ties to curriculum may have replaced these in the public consciousness. If so, curriculum will still demand our serious consideration.

Sad to say, contemporary philosophers of education have not given curriculum its due. I am not sure why. They have not, in the manner of the radical school reformers, expected curriculum to disappear. Perhaps they have taken it for granted, perhaps they have underestimated its importance, perhaps they have found it too hot to handle. Whatever the reason, contemporary philosophical investigation of curriculum has for some time been in a rut: it has focused on a very limited range of curricular questions and has endorsed a theory of curriculum that is seriously deficient.

The curricular theory to which I refer was first expounded by Hirst in a widely read

article.[1] It has since been elaborated by Dearden,[2] by Peters in collaboration with Hirst,[3] and by Hirst himself in a number of papers in his volume *Knowledge and the Curriculum.*[4] Anyone who remembers the movement of curricular reform of the post-Sputnik era and Bruner's popular book entitled *The Process of Education,* or is acquainted with the curriculum theory set forth by Phenix, or with that presented by Broudy, Smith, and Burnett, will find the broad outlines, if not all the details, of Hirst's 'forms of knowledge' theory familiar.[5] I have chosen to discuss Hirst's theory here, rather than one of these others, because his is the one that has come to dominate the thinking of philosophers of education. To use Kuhn's language, Hirst's theory has become one of *the* paradigms in the field of philosophy of education. Just as scientists articulate the paradigms of what Kuhn calls 'normal science,'[6] so Hirst with the help of both colleagues and critics has clarified and modified his forms of knowledge theory of liberal education.

Behind Hirst's theory lies a conception of liberal education as the development of mind and the identification of the achievement of knowledge with that development. Upon this foundation rests Hirst's thesis that a liberal education is an initiation into the forms of knowledge.

In his original statement of the theory Hirst distinguished seven forms of knowledge: mathematics, physical sciences, human sciences, history, religion, literature and the fine arts, and philosophy (p. 46). He has since taken history and the human sciences off the list, replacing them with moral judgement and understanding of our own and other people's minds. In doing so he has made clear what some readers did not realize, namely that the original list did not refer to disciplines, but that the forms of knowledge are to be understood as classes of true propositions. Thus, history and the human sciences have been dropped from the list not because Hirst now questions their disciplinary status, but because he has come to believe that their statements are not *sui generis*: some of them are truths about the physical world, some are truths of a mental or personal kind, and some presumably are moral or even aesthetic judgments (pp. 86–7).

Hirst takes the seven forms to embrace common sense as well as technical knowledge (p. 90). He also takes the forms to be irreducible (pp. 84, 89–90). He does not mean by this that they have nothing in common, that they share no concepts and logical rules with one another; his claim seems simply to be that each form has *some* unique concepts *and some* distinctive network of relations between concepts. The forms are not, however, eternal and immutable in Hirst's view (p. 92). They are human creations and as such are open to change; indeed, Hirst holds not only that each form can change, but that new forms can be created (p. 95).

Hirst makes it very clear that the forms of knowledge theory is compatible with different patterns of curriculum organization: for example, a curriculum with subjects like mathematics, physics, literature, and philosophy; or a curriculum organized around what he calls fields (as opposed to forms) of knowledge such as geography and engineering; or even a curriculum involving practical projects of design and building. Decisions about the organization of a curriculum are to be made on a variety of practical grounds, which he

does not attempt to specify. For these decisions to be in accord with Hirst's theory of liberal education, it is essential that the curriculum organization in question serves to initiate students into each of the seven forms (p. 51).

Initiation must not be confused with the acquisition of encyclopedic information or the expertise of a specialist. A liberal education, in Hirst's view, is neither a technical nor a specialized one. Hirst characterizes initiation as sufficient immersion in the concepts, logic, and criteria of a form of knowledge for a person to come to know the distinctive way in which it works; a coming to look at things in a certain way is what is wanted, and along with this an outline of the major achievements in each area so as to grasp the range and scope of experience that it has made intelligible (pp. 47–8).

The many critics of Hirst's theory of liberal education have concentrated on his analysis of knowledge. Thus, they have questioned his classification of art, religion, and morality as forms of knowledge;[7] they have challenged the criteria he uses to differentiate the various forms;[8] they have taken him to task for claiming that the forms can change;[9] they have argued that common sense should be recognized as a distinct form.[10] Important as criticisms of this sort are, they do not get at the heart of the matter, in part because so many of them seem to share Hirst's basic and mistaken assumption that the nature and structure of knowledge determines the nature and structure of a liberal education and in part because the form in which he presents his theory makes deeper criticism seem inappropriate.[11] Hirst's assumption about knowledge will be examined in the third section of this essay, and in the fourth section the implications of the sharp separation between mind and body implicit in the forms of knowledge theory will be discussed. First, however, I want to make clear the extent to which that theory is narrow and intolerant.

Kuhn has shown us that when a scientific paradigm faces serious problems the time for scientific revolution has come. I hope to show here that Hirst's theory has major flaws that no modification or clarification will remedy. It is a paradigm in need of a revolution. The object of this chapter, then, is to get philosophical investigation of curriculum out of its rut by challenging the existing paradigm, thereby extending the range of questions to which philosophers should devote attention. In the last sections I will sketch in the bare outlines of an alternative paradigm and will argue, even as I do so, that philosophical investigation of curriculum must go beyond liberal education.

Ivory tower people

The forms of knowledge theory conceives of liberal education as the acquisition of knowledge and understanding. In so doing it ignores feelings and emotions and other so-called 'noncognitive' states and processes of mind.[12] Except for what Hirst calls 'the arts and techniques of different types of reasoning and judgment' (p. 47), it also ignores *procedural knowledge or knowledge how.*[13] Complex conceptual schemes are to be acquired, but aside from the 'know how' involved in using them, knowing how to

do something (for example, playing the violin, riding a bicycle, writing a well-organized essay, or managing a political campaign) is not primarily a matter of having learned concepts, logic, and criteria. Rather, it is a matter of having learned skills and procedures.

Needless to say, as a result of its identification of liberal education with initiation into the forms of knowledge, the received curriculum theory of our day places physical education and vocational training beyond the pale of a liberal education. What is perhaps less apparent, but equally important, is that it also excludes from a liberal education the development of artistic performance, the acquisition of language skills, including the learning of a second language, and education for effective moral action as opposed simply to moral judgment.

A natural criticism to make of the forms of knowledge theory is that it is unduly narrow. As Hirst himself has said, it excludes all objectives other than intellectual ones and even the intellectual ends it seeks are limited (p. 96). He has made it clear, however, that his is a theory of liberal education, not the whole of education. Thus, feelings and emotions and procedural knowledge are not barred from a person's education; they simply fall outside the boundaries of a liberal education. When the fact that Hirst calls his concept of liberal education 'stipulative' (p. 96) is added to the restricted domain of his theory, he seems to have an airtight defense against the charge of narrowness. We cannot calim that liberal education is not by nature as narrow as he suggests it is, for he is stipulating its nature – making it up, if you will – and he surely has the right to do this in any way he sees fit. We cannot claim that the things the forms of knowledge theory leaves out are important to learn whereas the theory deems them to be unimportant, for Hirst never says they are not important; he simply leaves them for other theorists of education to consider. Small wonder Hirst's critics have focused on his analysis of knowledge. He has left nothing else open to attack.

Still, we ought not to ignore the fact that Hirst has chosen to call the conception of education he has formulated 'liberal education,' for this label is not neutral. Over the years liberal education has been thought of as an education having great value, indeed as an education having greater value than any other; we look down on education that is illiberal, some of us even refusing to call it education at all. It seems as if we cannot condemn Hirst's theory for being narrow, because it is not a theory of all education. Yet as Hirst must realize, 'liberal education' is an honorific title. Suppose he had used the label 'intellectual education' instead. Would his theory have been taken as seriously as it has been by philosophers of education? Would it have come to dominate thinking in the field so that to all intents and purposes it has become a theory of the whole of education deemed valuable? Surely not.

Philosophers of education today never ask the question, 'What is left over when we subtract a liberal education from the whole of education?' Seldom, if ever, do they try to develop theories to supplement Hirst's. Hirst is not to be condemned either for devoting his considerable philosophical talents to elaborating a theory having limited intellectual objectives or for the uses to which others have put that theory. At the same time we should recognize that his theory has taken on a life of its own at least in part because Hirst

has traded on the label 'liberal education.' The forms of knowledge theory has become the received theory not just of intellectual education but of that education deemed valuable, at least in part because Hirst has presented it as a theory of liberal education and liberal education is thought to exhaust that education which is valuable. In judging the forms of knowledge theory, therefore, we need to remember the limited claims Hirst has made for it, but we must also feel free to go beyond Hirst's explicit intentions. Granted he does not claim to be setting forth a theory of education in general, we must still ask if the forms of knowledge theory provides a tenable account of all education deemed valuable. Granted his concept of liberal education is stipulative, we must ask what the programmatic implications of Hirst's stipulations are.[14]

The great irony of Hirst's theory of liberal education is that it is neither tolerant nor generous: it conceives of liberal education as the development of mind, restricts the development of mind to the acquisition of knowledge and understanding, and restricts knowledge to true propositions. Because the gap between liberal education and the whole of education tends to be obscured and liberal education has come to be equated with that education deemed valuable, this series of restrictions has grave practical consequences. The best way to grasp them is to envision the 'products' of a liberal education conceived of as an initiation into the forms of knowledge.

The received theory's liberally educated person will be taught to see the world through the lenses of the seven forms of knowledge, if seven there be, but not to act in the world. Nor will that person be encouraged to acquire feelings and emotions. The theory's liberally educated person will be provided with knowledge about others, but will not be taught to care about their welfare, let alone to act kindly toward them. That person will be given some understanding of society, but will not be taught to feel its injustices or even to be concerned over its fate. The received theory conceives of a liberally educated person as an ivory tower person: one who can reason, but has no desire to solve real problems in the real world; one who understands science, but does not worry about the uses to which it is put; one who grasps the concepts of biology, but is not disposed to exercise or eat wisely; one who can reach flawless moral conclusions, but has neither the sensitivity nor the skill to carry them out effectively.

We make fun of ivory tower people – their interests are so narrow, their inability to cope with the realities of life is so pronounced. Yet those who allow the received theory to dominate their thinking about curriculum may be said to encourage that life-style. In fact, there is nothing objectionable about a world in which *some* individuals choose to live in an ivory tower, but imagine a world populated by the people envisioned by Hirst's theory.

It will be said that this portrait of the forms of knowledge theory's liberally educated person depends for its validity on the false assumption that no other education will be received. To be sure, the portrait is a caricature. Some people educated according to the theory will no doubt become competent doers and makers; some will become moral agents and some social reformers. From the standpoint of the theory in its role as paradigm of education deemed valuable, however, this will all be accidental, for what matters is simply

that the forms of knowledge be acquired. To be sure, the theory does not require an educated person to live in an ivory tower. Yet by failing to address the question of how best to educate for effective participation-in the world, the theory-become-paradigm stands guilty of sanctioning a world filled with ivory tower people.

A supporter of the forms of knowledge theory of liberal education might argue that its 'products' will not be ivory tower people, because an education in the forms of knowledge sets people on the right track. Given an initiation in Hirst's seven forms of knowledge we can relax, they will say; competent action, moral agency, altruistic feeling will all fall into place. In a society whose dominant institutions fostered virtues such as caring about others, a sense of justice, honesty, and benevolent action, faith in the sufficiency of an initiation in the forms of knowledge might be justified. In a society whose institutions encourage conformity of thought and action, a desire for instant riches and worship of self – that is, in our society – I am afraid that such faith is nothing but a pious dream.

A supporter of the forms of knowledge theory with a rather different orientation might argue that ivory tower people are not to be despised; that, on the contrary, detachment, disinterestedness, and freedom from passion are ideals to be cherished. No doubt they are in some circumstances. However, when a country is fighting an unjust war, there is nothing admirable about a detached citizenry; when a regime is exterminating an ethnic or religious minority, a people free from passion is scarcely the ideal; when a government is caught in a web of corruption, a disinterested electorate is a foolish electorate. There is a time and place for the cool virtues of detachment, disinterestedness, and freedom from passion and also for the warmer ones of feeling, fervor, and taking a stand. The trouble with the ivory tower people of the forms of knowledge theory is that the cool virtues will not have been tempered by any warmer ones.

No theory of education can take everything into account. Does not the fact that the forms of knowledge theory ignores education for feeling, emotion, and effective participation in the world simply mean that it is incomplete? Does it really *sanction* nonparticipation? It must not be supposed that every theory endorses or sanctions everything it fails to address. This would be absurd. However, when a theory functions as the forms of knowledge theory does, namely, as a theory of that education deemed valuable, it surely must be held responsible for ignoring the development of such central aspects of human existence as action, feeling, and emotion.

The epistemological fallacy

Basil Bernstein, the British sociologist of education, has said, 'The battle over curricula is also a conflict between different conceptions of social order and is therefore fundamentally moral.'[15] He is surely right. Yet Hirst and too many of his colleagues and critics do not see the battle in this way. For them it is fundamentally epistemological: a conflict between different conceptions of knowledge.

According to a sympathetic critic of Hirst's theory, it is a principle of educational theory 'that upon one's analysis of the structure of knowledge depends what one will admit into a curriculum and what one will leave out.'[16] This critic has fallen victim to a fallacy that preys all too successfully on those who theorize about curriculum. The epistemological fallacy, as I will call it, consists in arguing from a theory of knowledge to conclusions about the full range of what ought or ought not to be taught or studied. Some years ago William Frankena warned against the epistemological fallacy, although he did not call it by that name. 'Suppose we hold that music is not knowledge,' he said. 'Does it follow that it should not be taught? Not unless we also accept the normative premise that only knowledge should be taught.'[17] His point was that decisions about curriculum content and objectives necessarily rest on value judgments. Theories of knowledge are relevant to curriculum theory and planning, but they are not in themselves decisive.

Hirst and a number of his critics have paid no heed to Frankena's warning. They seem to think that their respective accounts of knowledge are decisive in determining the broad outlines of curriculum, if not all its details (p. 27).[18] Their approach to curriculum theory is understandable, for it gives them authority in relation to curriculum that otherwise Hirst's own conception of the task of philosophers would deny them. Hirst has argued that philosophy is an analytic pursuit: concerned with the clarification of concepts and propositions, it investigates the meanings of terms and expressions and the logical relations and presuppositions these terms and expressions involve (p. 1). In this view of philosophy there is no place for the making of value judgments. If Frankena is right – if value judgments are an essential ingredient in decisions about what should be taught and studied – then those who accept Hirst's conception of philosophy must also accept a rather limited role for philosophers *vis-à-vis* curriculum. They can offer analyses of the concept of knowledge, but they will have to do so in the realization that curriculum planners may reject them saying, 'Who cares if music is not a form of knowledge. On independent grounds it ought to be part of a liberal education.' If, however, value judgments can be circumvented, philosophers can accept Hirst's conception of philosophy and also dictate the broad outlines of curriculum.

By virtue of his definition of liberal education and his conception of mind, Hirst's forms of knowledge theory gives the *appearance* of dispensing with value judgments, but it does not in fact do so. His claim that a liberal education consists in an initiation into the forms of knowledge does not seem to require value judgments, because liberal education is defined as the development of mind and the latter is identified with the acquisition of knowledge. Since on Hirst's account there are seven forms of knowledge, the conclusion that a liberal education is an initiation into those forms seems unavoidable.[19] Given his definitions, his claim that all the objectives of a liberal education are intellectual seems unavoidable too.

Definitions and analyses are not sacrosanct, however. Hirst's analysis of knowledge is a description of a certain kind. Like all descriptions it is selective; it singles out some aspects of knowledge to the exclusion of others. Assuming that Hirst has given us a true

account of the nature of knowledge, alternative ones singling out different aspects of knowledge can nonetheless be constructed. But if alternative analyses can be given, upon which analysis should curriculum decisions rest? In particular, why should we choose Hirst's analysis of knowledge rather than some other, for example, one that divides knowledge into two forms – empirical and nonempirical?[20] We cannot appeal to epistemology for an answer to this question, since the answer will depend on our purposes. Given some purposes, Hirst's account of knowledge will be the one to choose; given others, it will not be. Since our choice of an account of knowledge depends on our aims or purposes, we cannot use an account of knowledge to justify these. Their justification will involve value judgments about the kind of life people should lead and the kind of society they should live in.

Those who commit the epistemological fallacy say that the nature of liberal education is dependent on their analysis of knowledge when, in fact, their analysis of knowledge depends on their views of the nature of liberal education. They decide what a liberal education should consist in and tailor their accounts of knowledge accordingly. It is because they think the arts ought to be part of a liberal education that they take the trouble to argue at such length that they constitute a form of knowledge. It is because they believe that religion and moral judgments ought to belong to a liberal education that they worry about their cognitive status. In effect, being worthy of inclusion in a liberal education is sufficient for something to be knowledge for them.

Hirst assumes that a liberal education consists solely in knowledge. This is why he has to tailor his theory of knowledge to fit the arts and other fields, such as religion, whose cognitive status is in doubt. But this assumption is not required by a conception of liberal education as the development of mind. To be sure, Hirst identifies the development of mind with the acquisition of knowledge, but just as there can be alternative analyses of knowledge so too there can be alternative conceptions of mind. We have feelings and emotions, moods and attitudes. These and other noncognitive states and processes can figure in an account of mind. Thus, when a conception of mind enters into a curriculum theory, once again a choice nmst be made. Why should Hirst's conception of mind in terms of knowledge alone be adopted, rather than one which, for example, embraces feelings and emotions too? A choice is involved that rests not on the nature and structure of mind, but on one's educational purposes.

Actually, no matter what account of mind is adopted, an education intent on developing mind need not develop only those characteristics thought to define it. So long as noncognitive states and processes of mind exist, educators have the option of developing them. Indeed, even if they did not exist, an education of the mind could try to bring them into existence and develop them. Philosophical analyses are not as powerful as they seem. For Hirst's account of mind to determine curriculum we would have to agree not simply with his conceptions of liberal education and of mind, but with the assumption that liberal education ought to develop only the aspect of mind he singles out as definitive, namely knowledge.

As I have already made clear, Hirst conceives of the forms of knowledge theory as a

theory of liberal education, not the whole of education. Liberal education is concerned, he says, with 'those elements in a total education that are logically basic' (p. 96). Since in his view noncognitive mental states are dependent on cognitive ones, he concludes that the latter are the most fundamental or basic curriculum objectives.[21] Noncognitive states are not thereby barred from a person's education; as objectives they simply fall outside the boundaries of a liberal education.

Once again, however, we find Hirst in the clutches of the epistemological fallacy. From the fact, if it is one, that noncognitive states are dependent on cognitive ones and hence that cognitive states are logically basic, it does not follow that cognitive educational objectives are logically basic. If it were the case that once mind was developed, feelings and emotions, attitudes and sentiments would take care of themselves, there might be reason to consider cognitive objectives as in some sense primary. As we have seen, however, no such case can be made in relation to our society. Hirst does not himself subscribe to the view that an initiation in the forms of knowledge *simpliciter* makes one a person for all seasons. In his view an education in the forms of knowledge is necessary, not sufficient, for the development of desirable noncognitive states and processes. It lays the groundwork, so to speak. Thus he says, 'Only in so far as one understands other people can one come to care about them and actively seek their good.'[22] Even this more modest thesis is false, however. Do children first understand their parents and then care about them? Do we not often discover as adults that we cannot understand those we care about? Furthermore, if we grant Hirst his premise, it does not follow that an education in the knowledge required to understand others is therefore more basic or important than an education in caring for others and actively seeking their own good.

In sum, neither curriculum content nor curriculum objectives are determined by the structure we attribute to knowledge. In choosing them we make value judgments about our educational purposes and we set these, in turn, in relation to the moral, social, and political order we believe to be desirable.

An untenable dualism

John Dewey spent his life trying to combat the tendency of educators to separate reason from emotion, thought from action, education from life.[23] The forms of knowledge theory of liberal education resurrects the dualisms Dewey thought he was laying to rest. It does so by banishing both knowledge how and noncognitive states and processes from its conception of mind, and hence from the realm of liberal education. But this is just a part of the story. The theory relies on a conception of liberal education that divorces mind from body. It thus makes education of the body nonliberal, thereby denying it value. Since most action involves bodily movement, education of and for action is denied value also.

Ivory tower people are a legacy of the dualisms that Hirst's stipulative concept of

liberal education presupposes. Lest it be imagined that the received theory's value judgments stop there, I refer the reader to the work C.B. Macpherson has done on the life and times of liberal democracy.[24] Through the use of historically successive models, Macpherson has revealed the assumptions about people and about the whole society implicit in democratic theory. Thus, the democracy of John Stuart Mill, John Dewey, and A.D. Lindsay viewed people as exerters, developers, and enjoyers of their own capacities. Developmental democracy, as Macpherson calls it, took the good society to be one that permits and encourages all people to act as exerters, developers, and enjoyers of their own capacities. The model that has replaced developmental democracy is quite different. Equilibrium democracy, the democracy of Joseph Schumpeter and Robert Dahl, is not a kind of society or set of moral ends; it is simply a mechanism for choosing governments. The citizens' role is not to decide political issues, but to choose between sets of politicians. Voters are consumers rather than active participants in the political process. Indeed, equilibrium democracy requires and encourages apathy.

Equilibrium democracy is the kind of democracy that prevails in our society. The equilibrium it maintains is one of inequality. The consumer sovereignty it claims to provide is an illusion. Equilibrium democracy, in other words, is not very democratic. Nevertheless, the received theory's liberally educated person is tailor made for equilibrium democracy, since that theory encourages neither the development, enjoyment, and exertion of one's capacities nor participation in political and social life.

The strength of the connection between the forms of knowledge theory and equilibrium democracy must not, of course, be exaggerated. Hirst's theory is compatible with those political models other than equilibrium democracy that also require apathetic citizens. Equilibrium democracy, in turn, is compatible with other curriculum theories that also yield apathetic people. But the ivory tower people of the theory are *not* compatible with developmental democracy. Nor are they compatible with the participatory democracy, which Macpherson sees as a desirable successor to equilibrium democracy. In short, while the forms of knowledge theory by no stretch of the imagination entails equilibrium democracy, acceptance of it commits one to political models that require, or at least desire, people to be passive rather than active participants in the political process. Ivory tower people are, after all, apathetic people.

Suppose Hirst's conception of mind were broadened to include noncognitive states and processes. A world populated by liberally educated people would then be a slight improvement over the one envisioned earlier: the people in it might care for others even if their caring did not prompt altruistic action; they might be concerned about injustice and the fate of modern society even if they did nothing about either; they might have a desire to solve the problems of the real world even if they had none of the requisite skills. However, as long as a conception of liberal education drives a wedge between mind and body, as Hirst's does, and liberal education is equated with the whole of valuable education, a liberally educated person will be a lopsided person: a thinker but not a doer, an experiencer but not a maker, a feeler but not a moral agent. And consequently a world populated by liberally

educated people had better be perfect to begin with, for the individuals in it will not act to make it better; even if it occurs to them to do so, they will not know how.

A conception of liberal education as the development of mind is not peculiar to Hirst; many educators conceive of liberal education in precisely this way. So long as the rest of education is slighted, Hirst's or any curriculum theory that singles out mind as the sole focus of liberal education implicitly sanctions a world inhabited by lopsided, apathetic people and, in so doing, a social, economic, and political order that will accommodate them.

Toward a new paradigm

A conception of liberal education as the development of a person can provide the basis for the much needed curricular revolution. A person consists in reason and emotion. A person is a thinker and an actor. More important, reason and emotion are inextricably bound together in persons and so are thought and action. To be sure, nothing follows about the content and aims of a liberal education from these facts about persons; an analysis of the concept of a person no more determines the general outlines of curriculum than does an analysis of knowledge. One could conceive of liberal education as the development of a person, but define a person in terms of mind alone and identify the development of mind with the acquisition of knowledge. That is to say, one could adopt an alternative starting point to Hirst's yet end up with his forms of knowledge theory of curriculum. However, a conception of liberal education as the development of a person can serve as the bedrock of a curriculum theory quite different from Hirst's.[25]

Begin with a conception of liberal education as the development of a person, add to it an analysis of the concept of a person in which mind and body are inseparable, mix in the value judgment that the purpose of a liberal education ought to be to develop us as persons and not simply as minds. Guidelines for a liberal education that drives no wedge between thought and action, between reason and emotion, begin to emerge. In such an education the acquisition of conceptual schemes would play an important role but a limited one. Initiation of the sort Hirst proposes into the forms of knowledge could be one of its components, but it would not be the whole thing. There would be initiation into various forms of skill, for example, artistic and athletic, linguistic and mechanical. In this liberal education there would also be room for feelings, emotions, and attitudes to flourish, for creativity and imagination to develop, for making and doing and moral commitment.[26]

Presumably an education is called liberal because it is thought to free us not only from ignorance, but also from the constraints of habit, custom, and inertia. The standard conception of liberal education would free our minds, but not our selves. Surely if being a victim of ignorance and a slave to habit, custom, and inertia are undesirable, then our whole selves ought to be liberated from them.

An education whose purpose was to liberate us as persons would include within its

boundaries a much broader range of things than the classic theory has dreamed of. Some would disapprove of a theory of liberal education developed along these lines for precisely this reason. If anything can go into a curriculum, one commentator on Hirst has said, then the concept of curriculum loses its practical value.[27] But to reject the principle that a liberal education should consist only of knowledge is not to say that anything goes. A theory that countenances more kinds of things than true propositions need not allow everything imaginable into the curriculum.

Others would object to the present proposal on the grounds that most skills and activities, feelings and emotions are picked up in the course of living so that to include them in a liberal education is to devote time and effort to them which could better be spent acquiring knowledge. I do not mean to deny that non-cognitive states and processes, as well as skills and ways of acting, will be acquired if they are not included in a liberal education. However, there is no reason to suppose that the attitudes, feelings, and emotions, the skills and ways of acting that are picked up in the course of living, will be ones that *ought* to be acquired. If particular skills and ways of acting, attitudes, and emotions are held to be desirable and others are held to be undesirable, then reasons of economy militate against a liberal education that ignores everything but knowledge.

The trouble with this liberalized theory of liberal education is not that it ignores the principle of economy,[28] but that it does not solve a very basic problem confronting the received theory, namely, that it is wedded to an atomistic ideology. Liberal education is supposed to free us from ignorance and the like so that we will be free in the sense of being autonomous individuals. Since autonomy involves action as well as thought, a conception of liberal education as the development of persons is more adequate to this task than Hirst's conception. However, individual autonomy is not the only important value for education to consider. Even as our education develops autonomous thought and action by liberating us from ignorance and the constraints of habit, custom, and inertia, it should bind us to one another and to the natural environment.

The atomistic ideology underlying the received theory of liberal education is reflected not in the fact that the 'products' of that theory learn to be apathetic people, but that they learn to be asocial. Because no attempt is made to foster other-directed feelings and emotions, such as caring about the welfare of others and a sense of injustice, or to develop other-directed skills, their social links will at best be weak and their social sensitivity will be nonexistent. Just as the tobacco farmer who, when asked if he experienced any moral conflict about continuing to grow his crop in the face of massive evidence linking cigarette smoking to death, allowed that it never occurred to him to feel guilty because his primary responsibility was to make a living, the liberally educated people of the received theory will see themselves if all goes as planned not as mutually dependent, cooperating members of a society, but as self-sustaining atoms.[29]

A liberal education conceived of as the development of a person can encompass other-directed sentiments and skills. However, so long as a theory of liberal education conceives of persons as self-sustaining atoms who may bump up against one another in passing, but

are socially indifferent, it will be deficient, for it will ignore the kind of social and natural education everyone should have.

An adequate theory of education needs to go beyond a conception of persons as autonomous individuals not simply because education ought to bind human beings to one another, but because it should bind us to the natural order of which we are a part.[30] Just as education should foster in us a sense of community, so too, in the interests of future generations, if nothing else, it should foster recognition of our solidarity with other living things. A sense of community requires a change in our consciousness so that we see ourselves not as self-sustaining atoms, but as dependent, contributing members of a group. A recognition of our solidarity with nature requires at least as great a shift in consciousness, for we must begin to see the Earth as a cooperative endeavor in which 'other lives have lives to live,'[31] indeed, to see the Earth as part of a larger order in which other 'Earths' have lives to live. Changes in consciousness are not enough, however. Natural education should foster restraint, so that the natural environment will not be destroyed, and a willingness to share what there is with other species, even while social education fosters other-directed feelings, attitudes, and ways of acting.

Agenda for the future

Can the kind of social and natural education I have just sketched in be accommodated by a new paradigm of *liberal* education? This question cannot be answered simply by an appeal to the nature of knowledge or mind or a person or liberal education itself for, as we have seen, an account of each of these will depend on one's purposes. I do not mean to suggest that for every purpose some form or other of liberal education is suitable: for some purposes, liberal education of any sort may be inappropriate. An answer to our question will, therefore, rest on value judgments about the worth of the education at issue and on decisions about the relationship of liberal education to the rest of education. If liberal education continues to be equated with that education which is valuable, then a positive answer to our question must be given. If, on the other hand, liberal education is acknowledged to be one valuable part of education but not the only valuable part, then it may not matter very much if social and natural education fall outside its boundaries.

What does matter is that the received theory of our day – the forms of knowledge theory – be replaced by a more general curricular paradigm, whether that be a paradigm of liberal education or not: one that does not ignore the forms of knowledge, but reveals their proper place in the general scheme of things as but one part of a person's education; one that integrates thought and action, reason and emotion, education and life; one that does not divorce persons from their social and natural contexts; one that embraces individual autonomy as but one of many values. What matters, in other words, is that a new paradigm become established that addresses itself, not simply by default, to the whole of that

education which is valuable.

With a new paradigm will come new questions for philosophers of education to answer. The nature of social and natural education will have to be explored as will their relationship to education for individual autonomy. The nature of vocational education and its relationship to liberal education will become a respectable concern as will the general problem of the integration of education and life. But this is not all. Because the existing paradigm incorporates the epistemological fallacy, it obscures the links between curriculum theory and social and political theory. A whole range of philosophical questions will become pertinent when that paradigm is discarded: for example, questions about the relationship between philosophy of education on the one hand and social and political philosophy on the other, about the social and political implications of curricular aims and content, about the possibility or impossibility of curricular neutrality.

The epistemological fallacy encourages philosophers to take the structure of knowledge and run. It fosters the illusion that curriculum can be determined without their asking questions about the good life and the good society. It also allows them to ignore the social and historical context of education. Yet to formulate curricular aims and content without taking into account the educational setting and also the practices and beliefs of the larger society is to court disaster. In freeing us from the epistemological fallacy a new paradigm will force us to confront questions about the relationship between a curriculum and both its educational and societal setting. Ultimately, this will lead to questions about hidden curriculum, something philosophers of education have pretended does not exist, and to questions about curriculum, both hidden and otherwise, in nonschool settings.

An agenda for the future cannot be laid out in detail. One thing leads to another in philosophy of education as in any other form of inquiry. It should be clear, however, that the curriculum questions to be addressed come in various guises. Some will call for analysis, some for the making of value judgments. Some will require knowledge of school practices, some will require broader institutional knowledge. Some will lead directly to epistemology, some will lead to ethics and social philosophy. At the outset of this paper I said that philosophers of education have not given curriculum its due. I trust that once the wide range of relevant topics and variety of questions are recognized – once the philosophical challenge of curriculum is felt – this long-standing neglect will disappear.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1. Paul H. Hirst, 'Liberal Education and the Nature of Knowledge,' in *Philosophical Analysis and Education,* Reginald D. Archambault (ed.) (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965), pp. 113–38. Reprinted as chapter 3 in Paul H. Hirst, *Knowledge and the Curriculum* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974; all page references to Hirst appearing in parentheses in the text are to this latter volume) (chapter 3 is reprinted in this volume, Paper 12(i)).

2. R.F. Dearden, *The Philosophy of Primary Education* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968).

3. R.S. Peters and Paul H. Hirst, *The Logic of Education* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970).

4. Hirst, *Knowledge and the Curriculum.*

5. Jerome S. Bruner, *The Process of Education* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1961); Philip Phenix, *Realms of Meaning* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964); Harry S. Broudy, B. Othanel Smith, and Joe R. Burnett, *Democracy and Excellence in American Secondary Education: A Study in Curriculum Theory* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1964).

6. Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2nd edn, 1970).

7. See, for example, A.J. Watt, 'Forms of Knowledge and Norms of Rationality,' *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 6 (March 1974): 1–11; Robin Barrow, *Common Sense and the Curriculum* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1976), chap. 2; James Gribble, 'Forms of Knowledge,' *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 2 (March 1970): 3–14. See Hirst's reply to Gribble, 'Literature, Criticism, and the Forms of Knowledge,' *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 3 (April 1971): 11–18. Reprinted in Hirst, *Knowledge and the Curriculum,* chap. 10.

8. See, for example, Gribble, 'Forms of Knowledge'; D.C. Phillips, 'The Distinguishing Features of Forms of Knowledge,' *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 3 (October 1971); 27–35; *idem,* 'Perspectives on Structure of Knowledge and the Curriculum' in *Contemporary Studies in the Curriculum* Peter W. Musgrave (ed.) (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1974).

9. Allen Brent, *Philosophical Foundations for the Curriculum* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1978), chap. 3.

10. John P. White, *Towards a Compulsory Curriculum* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), chap. 6.

11. In *Epistemology and Education* (New York: Harvest, forthcoming), Michael Matthews does get to the heart of the matter after providing an especially clear, comprehensive account of the development of Hirst's theory. Some of the points to be made here were reached independently by Matthews.

12. I qualify my introduction of the term 'noncognitive' in this way to indicate that, although

I am following ordinary usage, I do not mean to commit myself to the view that there is a hard and fast distinction between the cognitive and the noncognitive.

13. Hirst himself points this out (p. 57). For a criticism of Hirst based on this point, see Ormond Smythe, 'On the Theory of Forms of Knowledge,' in *Philosophy of Education 1978,* Proceedings of the Thirty-fourth Annual Meeting of the Philosophy of Education Society (Champaign, Ill.: The Society, 1979), pp. 28–39. For the classic account of *knowledge how,* see Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (London: Hutchinson's University Library, 1947), chap. 2.

14.   For a discussion of programmatic and stipulative definitions, see Israel Scheffler, *The Language of Education* (Springfield, Ill.: Charles C. Thomas, 1960), chap. 1. The reader is referred also to Robert H. Ennis, 'Rational Thinking and Educational Practice' in Jonas Soltis (ed.), *Philosophy of Education* (Chicago: National Society for the Study of Education, 1981), and to Ennis's discussion of impact equivocation in his presidential address to the Philosophy of Education Society in 1979. See *Philosophy of Education 1979,* Proceedings of the Thirty-fifth Annual Meeting of the Philosophy of Education Society (Normal, Ill.: The Society, 1980), pp. 3–30.

15. Basil Bernstein, *Class, Codes, and Control,* vol. 3 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), p. 81.

16. Brent, *Philosophical Foundations of the Curriculum,* p. 31.

17. William K. Frankena, 'A Model for Analyzing a Philosophy of Education,' in *Readings in the Philosophy of Education: A Study of Curriculum,* Jane R. Martin (ed.) (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1970), pp. 15–22.

18. 'The question is simply which account of knowledge is correct, for surely that alone can form the basis of defensible curriculum planning' (Hirst, *Knowledge and the Curriculum,* p. 67).

19. Even with these definitions the conclusion does not follow unless a premise is added that initiation into all the forms of knowledge, that is, comprehensive initiation, is essential for the development of mind.

20. As, for example, Barrow does in *Common Sense and the Curriculum.*

21. Peters and Hirst, *The Logic of Education,* p. 62.

22. *Ibid.*

23. See, for example, John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1961).

24. C.B. Macpherson, *The Life and Times of Democracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977).

25. Langford claims that to be educated is to learn to be a person. See Glenn Langford, 'The Concept of Education,' in *New Essays in the Philosophy of Education,* Glenn Langford and D.J. O'Connor (eds) (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), pp. 3–32. My conception of liberal education does not assume, as Langford's seems to, that those being educated are not already persons.

26. Hirst and Peters argue that the central feature of emotions is cognition and that for cre-

ativity to be developed initiation into the forms of knowledge is essential. See Hirst and Peters, *The Logic of Education,* pp. 32, 49ff. Supposing for the sake of argument that they are right, it does not follow that the forms of knowledge and limited intellectual objectives should monopolize a liberal education. Moreover, creativity in practical endeavors such as the arts and politics are not served by this argument.

27. Brent, *Philosophical Foundations of the Curriculum,* p. 31.

28. For discussions of curricular economy see Israel Scheffler, 'Justifying Curriculum Decisions,' in *Readings in the Philosophy of Education,* Martin (ed.), pp. 23–31; White, *Towards a Compulsory Curriculum,* pp. 37, 71–2.

29. For discussions of atomism and education see Elizabeth Cagan, 'Individualism, Collectivism, and Radical Education Reform,' *Harvard Educational Review* 48 (May 1978): 227–66; Ann Diller and Nancy Glock, 'Individualized Instruction: Some Questions,' in *Philosophy of Education 1977,* Proceedings of the Thirty-third Annual Meeting of the Philosophy of Education Society (Urbana, Ill.: The Society, 1977), pp. 190–7.

30. On this topic, see Stephen R.L. Clark, *The Moral Status of Animals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977).

31. *Ibid.,* p. 160.

13

EDUCATION: THE ENGAGEMENT AND ITS FRUSTRATION

Michael Oakeshott

Education in its most general significance may be recognized as a specific transaction which may go on between the generations of human beings in which new-comers to the scene are initiated into the world they are to inhabit. Thus, for example, when in a late medieval formulation of the duties of human beings there appeared the precept that parents should educate their children, education was being recognized as a moral transaction, something that may (but ought not to) be neglected, and distinguished from the unavoidable natural processes in which all living things grow up and either accommodate themselves to their circumstances or perish.

Consequently, education is recognized as something to be thought about; and in the course of reflection two topics in particular have emerged. The first is concerned to distinguish this transaction, to discern what is going on in it, to identify the relationships it involves, in short, to understand it as a specific human engagement. The concern here might be said to be with the question: What is the character of the world which a human new-comer is to inhabit? The second is the consideration of the procedures, methods and devices believed to be appropriate to the engagement. The second of these topics is clearly subordinate to the first, and all who have thought profoundly about it have recognized this subordination. I shall have little to say about it, except to notice, later on, how in recent times procedures and devices have broken loose from this subordination and have imposed themselves upon our understanding of the transaction itself, with unfortunate consequences. My concern is with the first of these topics. I want to display education as a human engagement of a certain kind and as a transaction upon which a recognizably human life depends for its continuance. And I want, then, to go on to consider some of the obstacles which now hinder and may even frustrate this transaction.

1

Human beings are what they understand themselves to be; they are composed entirely of beliefs about themselves and about the world they inhabit. They inhabit a world of intelligibles; that is, a world composed, not of physical objects, but of occurrences which have meanings and are recognized in manners to which there are alternatives. Their contingent situations in this world are, therefore, what they understand them to be, and they respond to them by choosing to say or to do *this* rather than *that* in relation to imagined and wished-for outcomes. They are creatures of want. Their wants are not biological impulses or genetic urges; they are imagined satisfactions, which have reasons but not causes, and are eligible to be wished for, chosen, pursued, procured, approved or disapproved.

A human life is composed of performances, and each performance is a disclosure of a man's beliefs about himself and the world and an exploit in self-enactment. He is what he becomes; he has a history but no 'nature'. This history is not an evolutionary process or a teleological engagement; there is no 'ultimate man' hidden in the womb of time or pre-figured in the characters who now walk the world. Human beings pursue satisfactions which they believe to be desirable, but human conduct is not the flowering of a settled potentiality.

The wished-for satisfactions of human beings lie, for the most part, in the responses their utterances and actions receive from others, responses which are themselves utterances and actions related to the wished-for satisfactions of those who make them. Thus, human satisfactions are the outcome of transactions, and to seek them is to enter into a relation with another or with others. These associations are not physical 'interactions', like chemical processes; they are chosen and understood relationships. Human beings do not merely 'communicate' with one another; they speak words which have meanings and are understood (or misunderstood) by those to whom they speak. To hear is to listen, and to listen is to think; and the responses they make to one another are replies or rejoinders governed by the wished-for satisfactions of those who make them. Thus, human conduct subscribes to procedures, but it does not constitute processes. These procedures are not causes which determine what is said or done; they are composed of rules and rule-like considerations to be subscribed to in choosing what to say or to do. They are, moreover, multiple (there is no one comprehensive procedure to correspond to the word 'society' as it is commonly used); and each is an historic achievement which might have been different from what it is and which requires to be understood in order to be used in conduct.

Being human is recognizing oneself to be related to others, not as the parts of an organism are related, or as members of a single, all-inclusive 'society', but in virtue of participation in multiple understood relationships and in the enjoyment of understood, historic languages of feelings, sentiments, imaginings, fancies, desires, recognitions, moral and religious beliefs, intellectual and practical enterprises, customs, conventions,

procedures and practices; canons, maxims and principles of conduct, rules which denote obligations and offices which specify duties. These languages are continuously invented by those who share them; using them is adding to their resources. They do not impose demands to think or to 'behave' in a certain manner; they are not sets of ready-made formulas of self-disclosure and self-enactment; they reach those who share them as various invitations to understand, to admire, to approve or to disapprove. And they come only in being learned.

In short, a human being is the inhabitant of a world composed, not of 'things', but of meanings; that is, of occurrences in some manner recognized, identified, understood and responded to in terms of this understanding. It is a world of sentiments and beliefs, and it includes also human artefacts (such as books, pictures, musical compositions, tools and utensils) for these, also, are 'expressions' which have meanings and which require to be understood in order to be used or enjoyed. To be without this understanding is to be, not a human being, but a stranger to the human condition.

2

Now, I have begun with this characterization of a human life because, if it were not like this, education would be a redundant engagement. If a human life were a process of growth in which a potential became an actual, or if it were a process in which an organism reacted to its circumstances in terms of a genetic equipment, there would be no room for a transaction between the generations designed expressly to initiate a new-comer into what was going on and thus enable him to participate in it. But such is not the case. A human life is composed of performances, choices to do *this* rather than *that* in relation to imagined and wished-for outcomes and governed by beliefs, opinions, understandings, practices, procedures, rules and recognitions of desirabilities and undesirabilities, impossible to engage in merely in virtue of a genetic equipment and without learning to do so. Even the dexterities of human beings have to be learned because they, like everything else in a human life, are governed by desirabilities. For a child to learn to walk is not like a fledgling taking to the air: do I not remember being told to 'walk properly' and not shamble along as if I were an ape? The March hare's dance and the song of a blackbird may be attributed to genetic urges, but a waltz and *Dove sono* are historic human inventions which have to be learned and understood if they are to be known, enjoyed or responded to. In short, the educational engagement is necessary because nobody is born a human being, and because the quality of being human is not a latency which becomes an actuality in a process of 'growth'. The human new-comer is not an organism in search of an accommodation to circumstances favourable to its continued existence, he is *homo discens,* a creature capable of learning to think, to understand and to enact himself in a world of human enactments and thus to *acquire* a human character.

In considering what is going on in this transaction between the generations, then, the first thing to recognize is that it is a transaction between human beings and postulants to a human condition in which new-comers are initiated into an inheritance of human achievements of understanding and belief.

If this inheritance were composed of natural 'things' or artefacts, then its transmission would be hardly more than a mechanical formality, a handing over of physical objects. But it is not. It is composed of human activities, aspirations, sentiments, images, opinions, beliefs, modes of understanding, customs and practices: in short, states of mind which may be entered into only in a procedure of learning.

If this inheritance were merely states of mind, then the initiation might be achieved by hypnosis, by therapy, by means of subcutaneous injections or electric shocks or in so-called 'sleep learning'. But it is not. It is composed of states of mind which, because they constitute understandings, can be enjoyed only in virtue of their being themselves understood. To be human is to engage in activities knowing what you are doing. And consequently initiation into this condition can be only in an engagement in which the new-comer learns to understand.

What is going on in this transaction, then, is not the transfer of the products of earlier generations to a new-comer, nor is it a new-comer acquiring an aptitude for imitating current adult human performances; it is learning to perform humanly. Education is not acquiring a stock of ready-made ideas, images, sentiments, beliefs etc.; it is learning to look, to listen, to think, to feel, to imagine, to believe, to understand, to choose and to wish. It is a postulant to a human condition learning to recognize himself as a human being in the only way in which this is possible; namely, by seeing himself in the mirror of an inheritance of human understandings and activities and thus himself acquiring (in the words of Leibniz) the character of *un miroir vivant, doué d'action interne,* acquiring the ability to throw back upon the world his own version of a human being in conduct which is both a self-disclosure and a self-enactment.

This transaction between the generations will, however be inhibited unless there is a contingent belief in the worth of what is to be mediated to the new-comer, and unless this conviction is, somehow, also transmitted. Everything human exists in terms of the recognition of its desirability. And this civilized inheritance, this world of meanings and understandings, will be transmitted only where it inspires the gratitude, the pride, and even the veneration of those who already enjoy it, where it endows them with an identity they esteem, and where it is understood as a repeated summons rather than a possession, an engagement rather than an heirloom.

3

I am not concerned with that mysterious accommodation to the world which constitutes the early history of a human being: activity emerging imperceptibly

and intermittently from passivity; movements becoming actions; urges giving place to wants and wants to choices; presentations becoming re-presentations, remembered, recollected, recognized and gradually identified; occurrences coming to be recognized as events; 'things' emerging from characteristics, 'objects' perceived as signs and signs revealing alternative significances: sounds coming to be recognized as words with meanings determined by contexts; human procedures distinguished from natural processes – all the fluctuations which go on in the morning twilight of childhood, where there is nothing that, at a given moment, a clever child may be said exactly to know or not to know.

At home in the nursery, or in the *kindergarten,* in the early years of childhood, attention and activity, when they begin to be self-moved, are, for the most part, ruled by inclination; the self is inclination. Things and occurrences (even when they have been expressly designed or arranged by adults) are gifts of fortune known only in terms of what can be made from them. Everything is an opportunity, recognized and explored for the immediate satisfaction it may be made to yield. Learning, here, is a by-product of play; what is learned is what may happen to be learned.

But education, properly speaking, begins when, upon these casual encounters provoked by the contingencies of moods, upon these fleeting wants and sudden enthusiasms tied to circumstances, there supervenes the deliberate initiation of a new-comer into a human inheritance of sentiments, beliefs, imaginings, understandings and activities. It begins when the transaction becomes 'schooling' and when learning becomes learning by study, and not by chance, in conditions of direction and restraint. It begins with the appearance of a teacher with something to impart which is *not* immediately connected with the current wants or 'interests' of the learner.

The idea 'School' is, in the first place, that of a serious and orderly initiation into an intellectual, imaginative, moral and emotional inheritance; an initiation designed for children who are ready to embark upon it. Superimposed upon these chance encounters with fragments of understanding, these moments of unlooked-for enlightenment and those answers imperfectly understood because they are answers to unasked questions, there is a considered *curriculum* of learning to direct and contain the thoughts of the learner, to focus his attention and to provoke him to distinguish and to discriminate. 'School' is the recognition that the first and most important step in education is to become aware that 'learning' is not a 'seamless robe', that possibilities are not limitless.

Secondly, it is an engagement to learn by study. This is a difficult undertaking; it calls for effort. Whereas playful occupations are broken off whenever they cease to provide immediate satisfactions, learning, here, is a task to be persevered with and what is learned has to be both understood and remembered. And it is in this perseverance, this discipline in inclination, that the indispensable habits of attention, concentration, patience, exactness, courage and intellectual honesty are acquired, and the learner comes to recognize that difficulties are to be surmounted, not evaded. For example, in a profuse and complicated civilization such as our own, the inheritance of

human understandings, modes of thinking, feeling and imagination, is to be encountered, for the most part, in books or in human utterances. But learning to read or to listen is a slow and exacting engagement, little or nothing to do with acquiring information. It is learning to follow, to understand and to re-think deliberate expressions of rational consciousness; it is learning to recognize fine shades of meaning without overbalancing into the lunacy of 'decoding'; it is allowing another's thoughts to re-enact themselves in one's own mind; it is learning in acts of constantly surprised attention to submit to, to understand and to respond to what (in this response) becomes a part of our understanding of ourselves. And one may learn to read only by reading with care, and only from writings which stand well off from our immediate concerns: it is almost impossible to *learn* to read from contemporary writing.

The third component of the idea 'School' is that of detachment from the immediate, local world of the learner, its current concerns and the directions it gives to his attention, for this (and not 'leisure' or 'play') is the proper meaning of the word *schole*. 'School' is a place apart in which the heir may encounter his moral and intellectual inheritance, not in the terms in which it is being used in the current engagements and occupations of the world outside (where much of it is forgotten, neglected, obscured, vulgarized or abridged and where it appears only in scraps and as investments in immediate enterprises) but as an estate, entire, unqualified and unencumbered. 'School' is an emancipation achieved in a continuous re-direction of attention. Here, the learner is animated, not by the inclinations he brings with him, but by intimations of excellences and aspirations he has never yet dreamed of; here, he may encounter, not answers to the 'loaded' questions of 'life', but questions which have never before occurred to him; here, he may acquire new 'interests' and pursue them uncorrupted by the need for immediate results; here, he may learn to seek satisfactions he had never yet imagined or wished for.

For example, an important part of this inheritance is composed of languages, and in particular of what is to be the native language of the new-comer. This he has already learned to speak in its contemporary idioms and as a means of communicating with others of his kind. But at 'School' he learns something more which is also something different. There, studying a language is recognizing words as investments in thought and is learning to think more exactly; it is exploring its resources as themselves articulations of understandings. For, to know a language merely as a means of contemporary communication is to be like a man who has inherited a palace overflowing with expressions, intimations and echoes of human emotions, perceptions, aspirations and understandings, and furnished with images and emanations of human reflection, but in whose barbaric recognition his inheritance is merely that of 'a roof over his head'. In short, 'School' is 'monastic' in respect of being a place apart where excellences may be heard because the din of worldly laxities and partialities is silenced or abated.

Further, the idea 'School' is that of a personal transaction between a 'teacher' and a 'learner'. The only indispensable equipment of 'School' is teachers: the current

emphasis on apparatus of all sorts (not merely 'teaching' apparatus) is almost wholly destructive of 'School'. A teacher is one in whom some part or aspect or passage of this inheritance is alive. He has something of which he is a master to impart (an ignorant teacher is a contradiction) and he has deliberated its worth and the manner in which he is to impart it to a learner whom he knows. He is himself the custodian of that 'practice' in which an inheritance of human understanding survives and is perpetually renewed in being imparted to new-comers. To teach is to bring it about that, somehow, something of worth intended by a teacher is learned, understood and remembered by a learner. Thus, teaching is a variegated activity which may include hinting, suggesting, urging, coaxing, encouraging, guiding, pointing out, conversing, instructing, informing, narrating, lecturing, demonstrating, exercising, testing, examining, criticizing, correcting, tutoring, drilling etc. etc. – everything, indeed, which does not belie the engagement to impart an understanding. And learning may be looking, listening, overhearing, reading, receiving suggestions, submitting to guidance, committing to memory, asking questions, discussing, experimenting, practising, taking notes, recording, re-expressing etc. etc. – anything which does not belie the engagement to think and to understand.

Finally, the idea 'School' is that of an historic community of teachers and learners, neither large nor small, with traditions of its own, evoking loyalties, pieties and affections, devoted to initiating successive generations of new-comers to the human scene into the *grandeurs* and servitudes of being human; an *alma mater* who remembers with pride or indulgence and is remembered with gratitude. The marks of a good school are that in it learning may be recognized as, itself, a golden satisfaction which needs no adventitious gilding to recommend it; and that it bestows upon its *alumni* the gift of a childhood recollected, not as a passage of time hurried through on the way to more profitable engagements, but, with gratitude, as an enjoyed initiation into the mysteries of a human condition: the gift of self-knowledge and of a satisfying intellectual and moral identity.

Thus, this transaction between the generations cannot be said to have any extrinsic 'end' or 'purpose': for the teacher it is part of his engagement of being human; for the learner it is the engagement of becoming human. It does not equip the new-comer to do anything specific, it gives him no particular skill, it promises no material advantage over other men, and it points to no finally perfect human character. Each, in participating in this transaction, takes in keeping some small or large part of an inheritance of human understandings. This is the mirror before which he enacts his own version of a human life, emancipated from the modishness of merely current opinions and released from having to seek an exiguous identity in a fugitive fancy, a duffle-coat, a CND badge or an 'ideology'. Education is not learning to do *this* or *that* more proficiently, it is acquiring in some measure an understanding of a human condition in which the 'fact of life' is continuously illuminated by a 'quality of life'. It is learning how to be at once an autonomous and a civilized subscriber to a human life.

Now, this is not a merely fanciful or visionary characterization of education. Of

course, in the long history of the apprenticeship of new-comers to an adult human life other ideas than this of education have often intruded. Peoples with less complex inheritances of beliefs and understandings have had appropriately simpler notions of this transaction between the generations. And, of course, there are and have been better and worse schools, and better and worse periods in the history of any school. But what I have been describing is what the ancient Athenians understood as *paideia*: and, sometimes more narrowly and at others more generously, it was what was passed on (with appropriate changes) from the schools of the Roman Empire to the cathedral, the collegiate, guild and grammar schools of medieval Christendom. Moved by a vivid consciousness of an intellectual and moral inheritance of great splendour and worth, this was the notion of education which informed the schools of Renaissance Europe and which survived in our own grammar and public schools and their equivalents in continental Europe.

In later times, however, this understanding and practice of education has been invaded from two somewhat different directions. In both cases the forces of invasion have been gathering themselves over a period of some centuries, and both have been rewarded with considerable temporary success. Their common enterprise is to substitute for education some other and almost totally different idea of apprenticeship to adult life, and for 'School' some other and almost totally different practice of initiation.

4

The first of these invasions is to be recognized as an assault upon education directed against the idea 'School'. It is designed to abolish 'School', first by corrupting it then by suppressing it.

The engagement to educate is a transaction between the generations in which new-comers may enjoy what they can acquire only in a procedure of learning: namely, an historic inheritance of human understandings and imaginings. And the idea 'School' is that of a place apart where a prepared new-comer may encounter this inheritance unqualified by the partialities, the neglects, the abridgements and the corruptions it suffers in current use; of an engagement to learn, not by chance, but by study in conditions of direction and restraint designed to provoke habits of attention, concentration, exactness, courage, patience and discrimination and the recognition of excellence in thought and conduct; and of an apprenticeship to adult life in which he may learn to recognize and identify himself in terms other than those of his immediate circumstances.

The doctrine we are now to consider is that for all this there should be substituted an arena of childish self-indulgence from which all that might contain impulse and inclination and turn them into deliberate and knowledgeable choice has been purposely removed: a place where a child may be as rude as his impulses prompt and as busy or

as idle as his inclinations suggest. There is to be no *curriculum* of study, no orderly progression in learning. Impulse is to be let loose upon an undifferentiated confusion called, alternatively, 'the seamless robe of learning' or 'life in all its manifestations'. What may be learned is totally unforeseen and a matter of complete indifference.

Each child is expected to engage in such individual projects of so-called 'experimental' activity as he feels inclined, to pursue them in his own way for so long as his inclination to do so lasts. Learning is to be a personal 'finding out' and consequently it becomes the incidental, exiguous and imperfectly understood by-product of 'discovery'. To 'discover' nothing is to be preferred to being told anything. The child is to be shielded from the humiliation (as it is thought) of his own ignorance and of intellectual surprise, and sheltered in the unfrustrating womb of his own inclinations. Teaching is to be confined to hesitant (preferably wordless) suggestion; mechanical devices are to be preferred to teachers, who are recognized not as custodians of a deliberate procedure of initiation but as mute presences, as interior decorators who arrange the furnishings of an environment and as mechanics to attend to the audio-visual apparatus.

'Discoveries' may become the subjects of 'free' group discussions; or they may be written about in compositions to be esteemed, not on account of their intelligibility, but for their 'freedom' of expression. It does not matter how they are written so long as they are 'creative': to stutter independently is a superior accomplishment to that of acquiring the self-discipline of a mother tongue. Fancy will have no encouragement to flower into imagination, or impulsive expression to acquire the intellectual virtue of grace, let alone exactness. Seeing and doing are preferred to thinking and understanding: pictorial representation is preferred to speech or writing. Remembering, the nursing mother of learning, is despised as a relic of servility. Standards of understanding and conduct are not merely ignored; they are taboo. The so-called 'inner discipline' of impulse, coupled with persuasion and physical intervention, take the place of rules of conduct. In short, 'School' is to be corrupted by having imposed upon it the characteristics of a very indifferent *kindergarten*: 'Secondary Schools,' it is announced, 'will follow the lead already taken by primary schools.'

Now, it may be doubted whether anything exactly like this exists, even in America. What we have to consider is not a current practice, but a doctrine now loudly preached by persons in positions of authority.

Many of the writers who believe this condition of things to be both desirable and unavoidable are of no account. They affect to believe that 'School' as a deliberate initiation of a learner into an inheritance of human understandings and proprieties of conduct is, and must be, children condemned to a prison-like existence in cell-like classrooms, compelled by threats to follow a sordid, senseless and rigid routine which destroys all individuality, dragooned into learning what they do not and cannot understand because it is remote from their 'interests' and from what they have hitherto encountered, the victims of a conspiracy against 'life' who acquiesce in their degraded

condition only because to revolt would be to forfeit the subsequent opportunity of profitable employment. And a voluble revulsion from this delusion, eked out by rubbish about the 'pursuit of truth' and what purports to be a superior understanding of the current generation of children, is all that these writers have to sustain their pretence of having thought about education.

There are, however, others who have (or who are reputed to have) more substantial reasons for promoting this abolition of 'School'. There are, for example, those for whom *any* inheritance of human understandings, so far from being something to be esteemed and which should evoke gratitude and make a boy glad to be alive and eager to become human, is an insufferable burden. 'I say to myself ', writes one such would-be exile from the human condition, 'what happiness it would be to throw myself into the river Lethe, to erase completely from my soul the memory of all knowledge, all art, all poetry; what happiness it would be to reach the opposite shore, naked, like the first man.'

It seems appropriate that such a person should see in education and in 'School' (how ever well managed) nothing but a frustrating intrusion upon blessed innocence, proper only to be abolished and replaced by the 'experimental' activity of unguided explorers with virgin intelligences. But this is an illusion. This aspiration, so elaborately expressed in terms of a recollected human mythology, is itself an historic human sentiment. What is being celebrated here is not a wish to be released from an inheritance of human understandings, but a sentiment which is one of the most moving and most delicate components of our inheritance of human understandings: that tender nostalgia at the heart of all European poetry, that image of impossible release, which we encounter only in being educated. What is being expressed is an understanding of the human condition which could never itself be a reason for abolishing education.

A more modish defence of this enterprise to abolish 'School' springs, not from the belief that *any* inheritance of human understanding must be frustrating, but from the persuasion that what is alleged to be the only significant inheritance we have (namely, that which is called 'scientific knowledge') is both so recent and in process of such rapid transformation that 'to cram children with this formal body of knowledge which will quickly become antique' is clearly a lost endeavour. Where there is no 'relevant' inheritance of human understandings, where yesterday's frontier of knowledge is tomorrow's rubbish-dump of ideas, when we are in the middle of a technological revolution where skills and standards of conduct are evanescent, there is no room for learning which is not 'creative enquiry' or for 'education' which is not an engagement to solve a technological problem. 'School', no doubt, was appropriate enough for those obliged to seek understanding from their ancestors, but now both education and 'School' are anachronisms: there is nothing to learn.

But this enterprise of abolishing 'School' is not a new adventure, and these aspirations and announcements do less than justice to its antiquity and to the beliefs in terms of which it is defended. The current notion that 'School' and education should

be replaced by an apprenticeship to adult life in which the new-comer is engaged in an activity of 'discovery' and 'finding-out' for himself is the somewhat tattered relic of the error that the only inheritance which one generation has to transmit to the next is an inheritance of information about 'things' conveyed in words, and that it is, on this account, to be mistrusted.

Knowledge, so the doctrine ran, derives solely from the experience and observation of 'things'; it represents 'the empire of man over things'. And where it is knowledge about ourselves, it is not a moral understanding of the 'dignity' of man, but knowledge of psycho-physical processes. This knowledge is recorded in words, and in words it is passed on. No great damage would be done if these words were always accurate reports about 'things', but for the most part this is not the case; words are distorting images of 'things' and they corrupt the information they purport to convey. 'Words obstruct understanding.' If then, we are in earnest about knowledge, it is 'solid things', and not words, which should be 'the objects of our attention'. 'The first distemper of learning is when men study words and not things.' And if we are concerned to educate, we must not try to convey our observations to others in words, for 'knowledge ought to be delivered and insinuated by the same method whereby it was achieved', namely, by an enquirer engaging for himself in the observations of 'things' and making his own observations. Moreover, this is not only the proper way of learning, it also holds out the promise of genuine discovery; for important 'discoveries' are often made accidentally by people of no great intelligence: they may come to a child following an impulse to 'find out'.[1]

Now, I have been quoting from the writings of Francis Bacon, who may be recognized as the father of this project to abolish 'School'. Indeed, it is not without interest that he did his best to prevent the foundation of what became a famous school, The Charterhouse, on the ground that it would concern itself, like other grammar schools, with the misconceived engagement of initiating new generations of boys into an inheritance of human understandings. There is, of course, much in Bacon's writings besides this doctrine, and something to modify it; but at that now distant date there was set on foot, not merely a suggestion which might be recognized as a valuable addition to our methods of educating the very young (e.g. 'encourage children to look and touch'), but this misunderstanding of the educational engagement itself, with its often quoted slogan, 'Things not words',[2] with its taciturn teacher, its erroneous belief that 'language is but the instrument conveying to us things useful to be known', its total neglect of literature, its absence of *curriculum,* its accent on crude information, its elevation of inclination, its pragmatic aspirations, and with its conviction that a man's identity is to be found, not in his relation to an inheritance of human understandings, sentiments and beliefs, but in relation to a world of 'solid things' – all of which I have identified as the first of the current projects for the abolition of 'School' and the destruction of education.

In the doctrine of Bacon and his near contemporaries, Comenius, Hartlib, Milton

et al., 'education' stood, not for a transaction between the generations of human beings in which the new-comer was initiated into an inheritance of human understandings, sentiments, imaginings etc., but for a release from all this in which he acquired 'objective' knowledge of the workings of a 'natural' world of uncontaminated 'things' and 'laws' and of himself as a future of this world. This doctrine was early embalmed in a set of *clichés,* the repetition of which over the succeeding centuries constituted one of the 'progressive' strains in modern educational theory. It made no immediate impact upon the educational engagement of European peoples, but it emerged later as the *rationale* of a design to abolish education.

But the current invaders of the educational engagement do not stop at this project to corrupt schools by depriving them of their character as 'School'; they design and foresee their suppression.

The more hesitant of these reformers imagine the dissolution of schools in terms of a dissolution of the distinction between 'School' and the world outside. Their moderate vision embraces merely the abolition of the child and of 'School' as a place apart. What is to take its place is a 'community centre', a combination of a local parliament, a people's court, a village hall, an information centre, a clinic, a social guidance organization, a sports club, an amusement park, a polytechnic and a 'cultural centre'. Thither, children and adults will repair when they feel inclined to do so. There, they may together exercise their inclinations and their impulsive energies, which, in the case of children, will have 'burst out of the classroom box'. There, emancipated from the alleged superstition that knowledge is diverse, and at the age of twelve or therabouts, they will become equal participants in the local world of adult activities and win their 'education' from the open book of life. In this community centre the child–adult will find, not teachers, but 'trained social workers'; he will find a 'structured environment' which will provide endless opportunity for 'self-expression' and for making unforeseen 'discoveries'; and rooms equipped with 'technological devices', programmed teaching machines and apparatus to relay pictures and talk, broadcast from a central School of the Air. There, a stranger to duties, relieved from frustration, allegedly emancipated from the 'intrusion of adult interference', he will enjoy a self-determined 'education', limited only by the decreed exclusion of any alternative. For, of course, this suppression of 'School' will come about only in a dissolution of schools comparable to the dissolution of monasteries in sixteenth-century Europe; it will be the work of 'enlightened' governments.

Others have seen beyond this still homely vision of an amusement arcade and play-ground for all ages. Inspired by the promise held out by recent mechanical invention, they foresee a future in which each home will become 'the basic learning unit'. It will contain 'an electronic console connected with a central computer system, a videotape and a microfilm library regulated by a computer, and with a

national television network'. All 'education' will be dispensed from a 'central educational hub'. No longer will children have to 'go to school', or have 'to jostle their way into class'. Each child, at the touch of a button, will have access to a 'learning package' programmed for individual use. He will 'type on a surface resembling a television screen in response to recorded instructions regulated by a computer'; and, 'at the touch of a button, "teachers" may call up profiles of his progress and advise accordingly'. He will be able 'to choose his own educational goals' and pursue them at his own pace.

But the residual recognition of education which survives in these proposals or forecasts is absent from the plans of the most intrepid of our 'educational' projectors, who look forward to a final dissolution of both 'School' and schools. They design not merely the abolition of the child but the abolition of man. The child who asks himself, What shall I learn and where is the machine to teach me? is to be replaced by the social engineer concerned with the question, What sort of a 'human being' do we want and how may he be most easily manufactured? 'The possibilities,' writes one of these visionaries, 'virtually defy our imagination.' Here, in spite of the claim to be concerned with education, any pretence of teaching, learning or understanding has been abandoned. Desirable children will be the outcome of controlled genetic selection, and their 'behaviour' will be determined by brains stimulated by electrical currents and by the injection of extracts from other more distinguished brains, by inoculation with chemicals and by other irresistible process of conditioning. And with the emergence of this race of zombies, who behave impeccably, who are strangers to neuroses, plagued by no frustrations, unworried about their own identities (because they need none), but who can neither understand *nor* act, 'Man's best dreams,' says this same professor of education, 'seem almost within our grasp.'

To corrupt 'School' by depriving it of its character as a serious engagement to learn by study, and to abolish it either by assimilating to the activities, 'interests', partialities and abridgements of a local world, or by substituting in its place a factory for turning out zombies, are, then, two sides of the current project to destroy education. It is an enterprise for abolishing man, first by disinheriting him, and secondly by annihilating him. That some of the persons engaged in this enterprise should represent their doctrine as an improved understanding of the educational engagement, and that they should claim to be the friends and emancipators of children, is not unexpected; but the representation is false and the claim fraudulent.

But, although this enterprise and the doctrines which support it are the most carefully contrived of the current projects to abolish the educational engagement, they do not exhaust the current threat to education. And I will conclude with a brief consideration of another enterprise which has increasingly hindered this engagement and now threatens to obliterate it.

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The engagement to educate may be frustrated by the conviction that there is no inheritance of human understandings and beliefs into which to initiate a new-comer; or by the belief that there is such an inheritance but that, since it is necessarily worthless, the apprenticeship of each new generation to adult life should be a ceremonial rejection of what it would be corrupting even to inspect, followed by 'a disturbed and disturbing argument of a creative kind' in which each generation originates its own understandings, governed (one must suppose) by a self-denying ordinance not to inhibit 'progress' by divulging it to the next.

It may, however, also be hindered (and, indeed, in an important respect, utterly frustrated) by the belief that, although there may be a considerable inheritance of human understandings, sentiments, beliefs, etc., in terms of which a new-comer might be released from the grip of his immediate world and come to understand and identify himself as a civilized human being aware of standards of excellence in thought and conduct little or not at all reflected in the current enterprises and activities of that world, this identity is both distracting and 'socially dangerous'. It distracts from the ordinary business of life; and, since it is an identity not equally attainable by all, it is more apt to be socially 'divisive' than integrative. Hence, the apprenticeship of the new-comer to adult life should be an initiation, not into the *grandeurs* of human understanding, but into the skills, activities and enterprises which constitute the local world into which he is presently and actually born. The postulant to adult life is bidden to seek himself and to learn to enact himself in terms of an assigned or a self-chosen role in an association of *fonctionnaires*.

This I will call the substitution of 'socialization' for education. It is to be recognized as a frustration of the educational engagement and a destruction of 'School' because it attributes to the teaching and learning which comprise this apprenticeship an extrinsic 'end' or 'purpose': namely, the integration of the new-comer into a current 'society' recognized as the manifold of skills, activities, enterprises, understandings, sentiments and beliefs required to keep it going; in short, 'to rear the most "current" men possible, "current" in the sense in which the word is used of coins of the realm'.[3] And it may be recognized as a different frustration of the education engagement from those which I have already noticed; although, of course, there may be contingent connections between them.

The belief that what I have called 'socialization' should be substituted for education is to be distinguished, first, from the belief that we live in societies which, because they are associations of human beings, depend upon their members being human, that is, being in some degree educated persons. For, to believe this is not to attribute an extrinsic 'purpose' to the engagement in which these persons acquire a human character; 'being human', here, is recognized, not as a means to an end (i.e. living with other human beings), but as a condition for which it is meaningless to ask for a justification

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in respect of human beings. What else should they be? And secondly, it must be distinguished from the recognition that the qualities of educated persons may often be valuable in the performance of 'social' functions. For, while an educational engagement is not designed to *produce* performers of 'social' functions (this is what is meant by saying it has no extrinsic 'purpose') neither is it designed to *produce* 'socially' valueless persons.

The enterprise we are concerned with now may be most accurately described as that of substituting 'social' for educational consideration in the apprenticeship of new-comers to adult life. And, of course, this substitution of one set of considerations for another is hostile to the educational engagement and to the idea 'School', not because it necessarily excludes everything which might have an educational value, but because whatever is allowed properly to belong to this apprenticeship is admitted solely in respect of its alleged 'social' value and is recognized solely in relation to an alleged 'social' purpose. 'Service of the community' is an expression susceptible of a variety of interpretations in relation to 'education' – it may favour rare ability or commonplace equality – but wherever preparation for it is substituted for education 'socialization' has taken the place of the educational engagement.

The current project of substituting 'socialization' for education and instruments of 'socialization' for schools emerged, so far as Europe is concerned, from a somewhat different enterprise promoted or undertaken, for the most part, by the rulers of modern European states beginning in the late seventeenth century. What I refer to here is not the activities of these rulers (both Catholic and Protestant) in respect of the educational engagement itself when, beginning in the sixteenth century, they gradually usurped the *auctoritas docendi* of the medieval church. These activities were often extensive and were, of course, designed to promote the integration of those over whom they ruled. They included the imposition of confessional qualifications upon both teachers and learners in schools and universities, but they did not otherwise seriously modify the educational engagement. They were, for the most part, the exercise of the ecclesiastical authority which had fallen to civil sovereigns. And the many schools and universities founded at this time under royal or ducal charters or by private benefactors were institutions similar to those which already existed. They were novel only in reflecting the changes in the educational engagement which sprang from the 'new learning', changes concerned with the new appreciation (afoot since the fifteenth century) of the significant inheritance of human understandings to be passed on. Furthermore, in later times governments have acquired extensive control over the education of their subjects, over the *curriculum* of schools and the appointment of teachers, but without imposing considerations hostile to the educational engagement and to the idea 'School'. What I am concerned with now is not any of this, but a project which lies to one side of it, namely, the provision of an *alternative* to education.

In many of the states of Germany (notably Prussia), in France, in the Empire and elsewhere what was set on foot in the early eighteenth century was not any attempt to

change the character of existing schools and universities, or to modify the educational engagement; it was the project of providing some alternative apprenticeship to adult life for those who, mainly by reason of their poverty, enjoyed little or nothing of the kind. These, the *canaille,* as the 'enlightened' rulers of continental Europe so gracefully called them, were coming to be regarded as a liability. Stuck fast in traditional ways, out-flanked by economic and technological change, unable to provide successfully for themselves, they were convicted of making an inadequate contribution to the productive enterprise of the societies into which they were born. The project was to equip their children with some humble but more modern skills in virtue of which they might become an asset rather than a liability to 'the nation'. They were to be taught to read, to write, to figure, to measure, to 'take directions', to read and to draw diagrams, and to understand transactions in money; and religious instruction was usually added to this *curriculum.* Thus furnished, it was thought that they would be able to make a larger contribution to the well-being of 'the nation' and begin to recognize themselves more clearly as intelligent components of its natural resources, its 'human capital'. It was even recognized that a totally ignorant soldier was something of a liability, and the standing armies of the continent at that time were large. Moreover, this undertaking to 'integrate' the poor into 'the community' by equipping them to be more useful members of it was seen to promise a national system of so-called 'education', an *éducation publique* or an *éducation nationale,* itself the emblem of the emergent doctrine that rulers have a right to instruct their subjects and that subjects (particularly the poor) have a duty to contribute to the well-being of 'the nation'.[4] In England there was a similar recognition of the waste of resources entailed in the ignorance of the poor, but this sort of instruction had been unevenly provided since the late seventeenth century in parish and charity schools and in schools set up or taken over by such organizations as the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and later the National Society. It was not until later that the government began to play some part in it, and even then the continental doctrine that children (especially poor children) belong to 'the state' was slow to take root.

Thus, parallel to the collegiate and grammar schools of England and to their equivalents on the continent, there emerged an apprenticeship to adult life distinguished both by its brevity and because it was governed by 'social', not educational, considerations. It was geared to satisfying what were already thought of as 'the needs of the nation', and the well-being of 'the nation' was recognized to require that this instruction of the children of the poor should be appropriate to their future occupations. The institutions in which this instruction was dispensed were, everywhere, a mixture of new and old and reflected local inheritances. This alternative to education emerged from the surviving village schools of medieval Christendom, which had depended upon the uncertainties of local charity and the energy of the parish priest. And, no doubt, it long remained subject to these hazards. But it emerged clearly when, usually under the direction of a ruler, these were diminished, when attendance was made compulsory

and when its extrinsic purpose was more clearly understood and formulated.

This alternative to education, designed originally for the poor and as an undertaking of 'socialization', was, of course, sensitive to 'social' changes. And with the emergence of industrial occupations it was considerably extended. In England, for example, in the early nineteenth century, besides the parish and charity schools, there appeared private schools and 'academies' established to provide, not for the poor, but for the numerous postulants for the clerkly and other occupations of an industrial and commercial society. And since that time there has gradually emerged, in every European country, as an alternative to education, a systematic apprenticeship to domestic, industrial and commercial life in a 'modern' state.

It has been continuously thought about, rearranged, redesigned and improved. It has been enlarged in response to new 'needs', the period of time it covers has been extended and the qualifications it confers have become more precise and require to be earned in more exacting achievements. But its general character has remained unchanged. There is now, in most European countries, a primary stage in which literacy and numeracy are learned and practised; a second stage in which these accomplishments are extended and some general knowledge (particularly what is called 'scientific' knowledge) is acquired; and a third stage in which some specialized skill or technique is learned in an apprenticeship, a trade school, a technical college, a polytechnic or a private establishment where attendance may be full-time or in the intervals of employment. And it has come now to embrace nearly all the skills, techniques, crafts, trades and occupations in which the 'needs of the nation' are satisfied. During the last fifty years or so the whole of it (and not merely the earlier stages) has fallen more and more under the direction and control of governments; and in so far as this has been the case it has become susceptible to the sort of calculation entailed in a 'man-power budget' where 'the nation' is understood as a collection of interlocking skills and occupations each with its optimum establishment. And since it has long ago ceased to be merely the equipment of the neglected poor to make a greater and more various contribution to the well-being of 'the nation', other reasons have had to be found in terms of which to defend and to make intelligible this alternative to education, especially its second stage. For the most part these have drawn upon the beliefs that the 'needs of the nation' can be satisfied in no other way and that there are children for whom the ardours of education would be an unprofitable engagement; but in some quarters these have been supplemented by the assertion that this is itself education and not an alternative to it.

This apprenticeship to domestic, industrial and commercial life was, in its beginning, independent of the educational engagement being pursued in schools and universities. There were, of course, connections between them. Many of the entrants to grammar schools (and, before the invention of 'preparatory' schools, to collegiate schools) came from 'petty' and parish schools, and both in Germany and in France the *Gymnasia* and the *Lyceés* drew their pupils from the *Gemeinder* and the *Communaux* schools.

And those who supplied what were distinguished as the 'professional' needs of 'the nation' (lawyers, doctors, etc.), as well as many who engaged in industry or commerce, were persons who qualified for their profession or who learned their trade after having been to 'School' and perhaps university. But little of this was reflected in the educational engagment itself: the appearance of an 'Army class' or a 'mathematical side' were insignificant modifications.

Moreover, in spite of its 'social' design, the alternative to education was never totally devoid of educational features. In its beginning, when it was concerned with children up to the age of about eleven, perhaps the only significant element of culture it contained, the only suggestion it made to those who enjoyed it that they might recognize themselves as something more and other than potential units in what was coming to be thought of as a 'productive system', was the religious instruction, frowned upon in France, but elsewhere part of the *curriculum*. This catechetical teaching cannot have been very inspiring, but it at least intimated an identity and a 'quality of life' beyond the 'fact of life'; in Biblical stories something like an inheritance of human understandings was at least dimly to be discerned; and for many the Bible was the only 'literature' they were acquainted with. And long ago this 'primary' stage became the main field of educational experiment, which has had the ambiguous outcome of making it, in most European countries, both more and less appropriate as a preparation for 'School'. Similarly, when the period of time covered by the second stage of this apprenticeship to adult life was somewhat extended,[5] its 'socially' designed *curriculum* acquired some features which, although they might be there for 'social' reasons, held some promise of being educational; for example, a glimpse of the current myth of the history of the nation.

Our concern, however, is not with whatever tenuous educational features there may have been in this historic alternative to education (the second stage of which, so far as England is concerned, was re-examined by the Hadow Committee in 1926[6]), but with the invasion which the educational engagement as it has existed in the schools and universities of Europe has suffered from this alternative. For, after a brief but not wholly ineffective attempt to extend the opportunity of education to more of those who had not hitherto enjoyed it, this has become the most notable feature of the recent history of European 'education': the enterprise of *substituting* 'socialization' for education.[7]

By 'socialization' (let me repeat) I mean here an apprenticeship to adult life – teaching, training, instructing, imparting knowledge, learning, etc. – governed by an extrinsic purpose. The most common version of this alternative to education has been that which emerged from the efforts of rulers and others to equip the poor to make a more effective contribution to the well-being of 'the nation', and which has since been elaborated into more or less systematic arrangements for imparting to successive generations the knowledge and the skills required to sustain the enterprises and provide the satisfactions characteristic of a modern industrial and commercial society. And

here the project of substituting 'socialization' for education is that of imposing upon the educational engagement the considerations which comprise this extrinsic purpose. The other notable version of a 'social' alternative to education is a more recent appearance and pulls in a different direction: namely, that of an apprenticeship to adult life governed by the 'social' consideration that it shall be the same for all children. The design here is to reduce or to abolish disparities of opportunity and thus to generate a 'fully integrated' society. Here, however, the design and its imposition upon the educational engagement are inseparable: the design itself requires that all schools shall be the same and that none shall be 'School'.

In pursuit of this enterprise of substitution the chief agents have, of course, been governments; and it has been pursued in legislative proposals of various dimensions and different degrees of directness. It is a concomitant of that 'enlightened' understanding of government in which rulers are recognized as the managers of an association bent upon the achievement of some substantive 'purpose' or the enjoyment of substantial satisfactions and in which 'education' is regarded as merely a means to the chosen end. In one version of this enterprise, it is, with us, an old story. In 1821 a Bill was promoted in Parliament designed to require the collegiate and grammar schools of England (with the exceptions of Eton and Westminster) to provide the sort of elementary and vocationally directed training which was being provided in the parish and charity schools and in private 'academies' and institutions of all sorts set up for the purpose. And there are examples of grammar schools at that time departing from the terms of their foundation in order to engage in this activity. The other and more recent version of this enterprise, the project of replacing education with an apprenticeship to adult life governed by the consideration of 'social integration', may be illustrated in the proposals of one of its promoters: 'It is time', he writes, 'to ask more rigorously whether the present curricular differences between schools are socially divisive'; and he suggests that what he calls 'the linguistic discipline' of Latin is divisive and should *on that account* be abolished. And when he goes on to speculate on the 'common culture' to be disseminated in this alternative to education, his project is unmistakably the abolition of 'School': it is to be based upon 'flexible, exact and sensitive speech, creative writing, a cultivation of the living arts, an appreciation of the mass media and a concern for world affairs'.

I do not propose to follow the history or to forecast the fortunes of this design to replace education by 'socialization'. In most parts of Europe it has been a plodding engagement, enlivened by some dramatic moments and directed by the characteristic imbecility of political fanaticism. It was a project long before it became a policy; and in it those who might have devoted themselves to making the opportunity of education available to more of those who had thitherto enjoyed only an alternative to it, have devoted themselves, instead, to its abolition. Where governments already controlled whatever there was of a genuine educational engagement, as well as the current alternative to it, the task of assimilating the one to the other has not been difficult. And the outcome

(as in Russia) has been a single 'system' of apprenticeship to adult life which, while it may allow considerable internal diversity, is wholly subordinate to 'social' considerations. In England, a considerable part of the educational engagement (including all the universities) has sold itself over the last fifty years to what it supposed was a benign government genuinely concerned for its survival in difficult circumstances, only to discover that it has sold itself into 'socialization' and abetted its own destruction. And what remains are impoverished fragments which have to endure the threat of dissolution. Modern governments are not interested in education; they are concerned only to impose 'socialization' of one kind or another upon the surviving fragments of a once considerable educational engagement.

This situation, however, is not solely the outcome of a legislative policy bent upon denying to any what (it is supposed) some do not want or can make no use of. And it would never have acquired its present dimensions had it not been promoted by contingent circumstances and abetted by intellectual confusion. The enterprise of abolishing education by substituting some version of 'socialization' has found an ally in some features of those other, concurrent, projects from the destruction of 'School' which I have already noticed; it has been promoted, often inadvertently, by innovations in the educational engagement; it has been obscured by the noisiest of the controversies of the last fifty years (that concerned with the measurement and distribution of so-called 'intelligence'); and it has been confirmed in a corrupt way of thinking about the educational engagement itself. And something must be said about each of these self-betrayals of the engagement.

The alternative to education, invented for the poor as something instead of virtually nothing, was designed (for the most part by politicians) as an apprenticeship to adult life which, so far from offering a release from the immediacies, the partialities and the abridgements of the local and contemporary world of the learner, reproduced this world in its already familiar terms and provided the learner with more information about what was already within his reach and with skills which he was reckoned to be 'interested' in because he was already aware of them in use or in his own talents. The engagement was not to initiate him into a difficult and unfamiliar inheritance of human understandings and sentiments, but to give him a somewhat firmer grasp of what he recognized to be 'relevant' to himself as he was and to the 'facts of life'. He was not to be put in the way of understanding himself in a new context or of undergoing a palingenesis in which he acquired a more ample identity; he was merely to be provoked to see himself more clearly in the mirror of his current world. Those who promoted this alternative to education believed that its products would be 'more useful members of society'. And they no more confused this apprenticeship to adult life with the educational engagement than they confused the parish with the grammar school, the *école communale* with the *Lycée,* the 'public' school with the Boston Latin School, the *Realschule* with the *Gymnasium,* the 'secondary school' (in the Hadow sense) with the grammar or collegiate school, or a technical college with a university.

Nevertheless, the design of this alternative to education is both conceptually and historically connected with what purported to be a better understanding of the educational engagement itself. It was allied with the Baconian notion of 'education' as a concern with 'things, not words', as 'learning from life' and the discovery of 'how it works', with the absence of a *curriculum* (each day may be relied upon to provide 'experiences' to be looked into) which might disturb the learner by suggesting unfamiliar distinctions, with the reluctance to 'foist upon children problems which do not develop from their own interests' and with the desired and foreseen abolition of 'School' which comes from the dissolution of the difference between 'School' and the local world. In short, the political project of *substituting* 'socialization' for education has been sustained by beliefs about the educational engagement itself in which the alternative appeared, not as a valuable but admittedly inferior article, designed originally for the poor, but as an *educationally* superior article. And without this support (spurious though it is) this enterprise of substitution would, no doubt, have been more difficult.

These beliefs made little impact upon the educational engagement of Europe; they were hostile, not to the contingent vices of schools, but to the virtues embedded in the idea 'School'. And the engagement (represented in the *Gymnasium,* the *Lycée,* the grammar and collegiate schools and elsewhere) had educational traditions capable of resisting the enterprise of destroying it by assimilating it to the alternative. But, in recent times, there have been changes in *curriculum* and in methods of teaching which, sometimes inadvertently, have pushed the engagement in the direction of the alternative by allowing 'social' considerations in some measure to oust educational. The emergence of 'science' in the *curriculum* of schools and the study of languages are two examples out of many of this self-corruption of the educational engagement.

If 'science' had entered the educational engagement as an initiation into an intellectual adventure recognized as a component of an inheritance of human understanding and beliefs it would, no doubt, have constituted a benign and an appropriate addition to what was already there. But it did not. 'Science' belonged, instead and in the first place, to the alternative for education, designed to 'socialize', where it was recognized as useful information about the world related to some skill, craft or fabricating activity – what the Hadow Report was later to call 'practical science'. And when, thus understood, it was allowed to graduate to compose part of an educational engagement it was clearly eccentric to that engagement. And becoming established in this naive Baconian idiom as an alleged knowledge of 'things' not words, of objects not ideas, of observations not thoughts, as the Rousseauistic *leçon des choses* which still appears in the *Lycée* programme, it was confirmed in its eccentricity: its intellectual despicability could not be concealed.

Nevertheless, 'science' did find a place for itself in 'School'. It was, with some difficulty, detached from immediate vocational considerations; it remained for a long time 'useful information' about the natural world with which every educated man should be acquainted,[8] but in the course of time (within living memory) something has been

done to give it recognition as one of the great intellectual pursuits of mankind: but without notable success. It is now taught and learned more seriously, but its place in current educational arrangements remains ambiguous: chemistry, for example, has never outgrown its character as a sophisticated kind of cookery. And 'science' is still defended in terms of 'social', not educational, considerations: 'we *need* first-class surgeons, engineers, chemists, psychologists, social scientists, etc.', and unless they are started on their way in school we shall not get what our hope of affluence requires for its fulfilment.

Flattered by circumstance and linked with ancient heresy, an attempt was made to promote 'science' as itself a 'culture' in which human beings identified themselves in relation to 'things' and to their 'empire over things',[9] but it now deceives nobody; boys do not elect for the 'science sixth' expecting to achieve self-knowledge, but for vocational reasons. Regrettably, this is not yet the case with the no less fraudulent claims of the so-called 'social sciences' which have been pushed into the curriculum of schools and universities, but the reckoning cannot be far off. For a generation now they have remained in business only on account of their technical pretensions.

The educational engagement in respect of languages is to initiate learners into a language as a source and a repository of human understandings and sentiments, and it was this which the collegiate and grammar schools of England and their equivalents elsewhere undertook in respect of Latin and Greek and to a lesser extent in respect of a native language. What the learner submitted himself to was not a 'linguistic discipline' but an initiation into exactitudes of thought and generosities of feeling, into literatures and into histories in which the 'fact of life' was illuminated by a 'quality of life'. And when modern languages became part of our educational engagement (first, perhaps, in schools for girls) they were chosen for their literatures and they were designed to provoke the learner to identify himself in terms of a larger European culture: it was to read Lessing and Goethe, Molière and Racine, Dante and Leopardi, Cervantes and Calderon.

The counterpart to this in the alternative for education was, however, a different kind of undertaking, dominated by the belief that 'language is but the instrument conveying to us things useful to be known'. The languages taught were chosen in respect of 'social' (that is, commercial or local), not educational, considerations; and they were learned merely as a means of communication. And it was this extrinsic 'purpose' which made appropriate the methods of learning from which have emerged audio-visual language machines, 'language laboratories', and 'language laboratory assistants' instead of persons who had a profound knowledge of the languages, the literatures and the histories concerned. The alleged virtue of language machines is that 'they teach people to speak languages with confidence, and they do it fast', a virtue appropriate to the enterprise. And no harm would have been done if what was appropriate to the alternative to education, both in choice of languages and in methods of learning, had not been taken into the educational engagement and corrupted it. When it is said that a child

should learn a foreign language as he learns his native language, 'by hearing it spoken', what is being overlooked is that in the educational engagement of 'School' what he learns of his native language is precisely what never could be learned by 'hearing it spoken'.

The self-corruption of universities exceeds that of any other part of the educational engagement of European peoples. In times past English universities have often been indolent guardians of the engagement to educate and as often they have recovered, but for a generation now they have anticipated almost every design of governments to transform them into instruments of 'socialization', hardly needing to be bribed to undertake this destruction of themselves. Nevertheless, they have, of course, received a considerable push in this direction; not least in the Report of the Committee on Higher Education (1963), which assimilates them into a system of so-called 'higher education' understood as an investment in learners who have acquired certain qualifications, designed to equip them with the specially complicated skills and versatilities increasingly required if the nation is to satisfy 'the aims of economic growth' and 'to compete successfully with other highly developed countries in an era of rapid technological and social advance'. No doubt universities were intended by the committee to have a place of their own in this 'higher education', but they were to submit to the extrinsic purpose, the 'social' considerations, which identify it as an alternative to education. And in the event the disaster is not that they are being swamped by persons in search of almost anything but education, but their almost total destruction as an educational engagement.

The design to substitute 'socialization' for education has gone far enough to be recognized as the most momentous occurrence of this century, the greatest of the adversities to have overtaken our culture, the beginning of a dark age devoted to barbaric affluence. It emerged from a project, embarked upon about three centuries ago (which was neither stupid nor itself menacing to the educational engagement), to provide an alternative to education for those who, for whatever reason, fell outside the educational engagement. Since those times this alternative has been adjusted to respond to changing circumstance, it has been improved and extended to compose an apprenticeship to adult domestic, industrial and commercial life, it has generated a variety of versions of itself, and for the most part it has submitted to the direction of governments. Indeed, it has become what the world it has helped to create can recognize as a 'service industry'. It was designed as a contribution to the well-being of 'the nation'; it has been welcomed or endured on account of the affluence it is alleged to be about to procure, and attempts have been made to calculate its product in terms of costs and benefits; and it has been defended on the ground of what it is designed to produce and upon the more questionable plea that it is the most appropriate apprenticeship for certain sorts of children. This makeshift for education, however, was permitted to corrupt the educational engagement of European peoples; and it is now proclaimed as its desirable successor. The usurpation has everywhere been set on foot.

But the victim of this enterprise is not merely an historic educational engagement (with all its faults and shortcomings); it is also the idea of education as an initiation into the inheritance of human understandings in virtue of which a man might be released from the 'fact of life' and recognize himself in terms of a 'quality of life'. The calamity of the enterprise is matched by the intellectual corruption of the enterprisers.

There were, in the past, naive promoters of the most common version of this enterprise who believed it to be unfortunate that there should be schools not expressly designed to impart to learners information about the world they were about to enter and in fact often failing to impart this information in sufficient quantity because of their concern with an inheritance of human understandings; but they did not deny that such schools existed. Like Bacon they recognized Westminster College and probably recognized it to have some virtue, but they preferred Gresham College. And even Mr E. Robinson recognizes the existence of what he calls 'academic' education, although he deplores it as a grossly imperfect apprenticeship to adult life when compared with the excitement offered by 'the new polytechnics'.

And there are others who do not deny the difference but who mistake the distinction; while intending to defend the educational engagement against one version of 'socialization' they use arguments which merely identify it with another, and in this manner, inadvertently perhaps, banish education from the scene. For example, there are writers who are opposed to that version of 'socialization' in which the considerations which govern the apprenticeship to adult life are an overriding concern for 'social integration'. But the reason they give for their opposition is not that the project is destructive of the educational engagement, but only that its outcome will almost certainly be a lowering of the standards of achievement and a consequent failure to satisfy the need of society for a constant supply of first-class engineers, doctors, economists, teachers, mathematicians, chemists, technicians, etc. etc. So far as anyone can foresee, their expectations are likely to be fulfilled; at all events, these writers are correct in recognizing what they oppose as a calculated indifference to scholastic achievement and an earnest desire to impose a *solidarité de la sottise.* But to oppose it on the grounds that it will hinder the appearance of 'a succession of adults who possess the advanced skills upon which our survival depends' is to have surrendered to the false doctrine that education is to be understood as an investment of the human resources of the nation in an attempt not to be outdistanced in affluence by America, Russia or Japan. In short, these writers recognize a difference between education and its alternatives, but mistake the distinction as one of the standards of achievement in the pursuit of an extrinsic 'purpose'.

But the determined promoters of the enterprise to destroy education are restrained by no such lingering recognition of an educational engagement. They represent themselves as persons who have perceived a 'truth' which prejudice has concealed from others: namely, that everything has a 'social function', that everything is what its 'social function' declares it to be, and that, consequently, there never were and

never could be educational as distinct from 'social' considerations in respect of the apprenticeship of new-comers to an adult human life. Thus, it is said that 'the function of the public school and university system (*sic.*) has been to train a ruling *élite*', that 'the public school was developed to run an empire', that 'the ancient universities of Europe were founded to promote the training of the clergy, doctors and lawyers', that the function of a modern university is to impart 'skills which demand special training' and that most undergraduates know this to be the case and go there to acquire such skills, and so on.[10] It is said, in short, that education has never been anything other than a 'social investment' related (often imperfectly) to 'the needs of a society in respect of instruction'. Consequently (they continue), intelligent reflection about education must be reflection about the appropriateness of a current educational engagement to the needs of a current society; and educational reform (when it is not concerned merely with methods of teaching and learning) is detecting what are the 'functions' which together constitute a current society and devising a 'system of education' which will produce most economically the most adequate performers of these functions. And when these projectors settle upon 'economic development', 'the fight for economic survival' or 'keeping up in the economic race' as the engagement to be provided for, and represent themselves as the designers of an apprenticeship to adult life in which every boy and girl learns to identify himself or herself as a (perhaps functionally distinguished) member of a development corporation, they have no difficulty in appearing as benign reformers, doing no more than releasing the educational engagement from antiquated 'social' considerations and bringing it up to date. And the fact that their design for 'education' corresponds (with, of course, the appropriate enlargements) to the alternative for education devised in the seventeenth century for the poor is regarded as a tribute to the genius of the inventors of that alternative, who may be criticized only for not at once setting about the destruction of schools and universities, which were, even then, providing performers for functions of declining significance. Thus, the destruction of an educational engagement proceeds behind a veil of conceptual nonsense and historical rubbish, now called 'the sociology of education', and designed to persuade us that what is being destroyed never existed.

Education, I have contended, is the transaction between the generations in which new-comers to the scene are initiated into the world which they are to inhabit. This is a world of understandings, imaginings, meanings, moral and religious beliefs, relationships, practices – states of mind in which the human condition is to be discerned as recognitions of and responses to the ordeal of consciousness. These states of mind can be entered into only by being themselves understood, and they can be understood only by learning to do so. To be initiated into this world is learning to become human; and to move within it freely is being human, which is an 'historic', not a 'natural' condition.

Thus, an educational engagement is at once a discipline and a release; and it is the one in virtue of being the other. It is a difficult engagement of learning by study in a

continuous and exacting redirection of attention and refinement of understanding which calls for humility, patience and courage. And its reward is an emancipation from the mere 'fact of living', from the immediate contingencies of place and time of birth, from the tyranny of the moment and from the servitude of a merely current condition; it is the reward of a human identity and of a character capable in some measure of the moral and intellectual adventure which constitutes a specifically human life.

Consequently, education is not to be confused with that accommodation to circumstances in which a new-comer learns the latest steps in the *danse macabre* of wants and satisfactions and thus acquires a 'current' value in the world. Some of these steps, the 'specially complicated skills and versatilities' of which the Report on Higher Education speaks, have become intricate, and to learn them is an exacting task. But nothing a man may learn in this respect has anything whatsoever to do with education.

It is now about two centuries since our educational engagement began to be corrupted by having imposed upon it the character of a school of dancing. This usurpation has been promoted by confused beliefs about the transaction itself, and it has been procured by 'enlightened' governments. It is now far advanced. Fragments of an educational engagement, however, remain: relatively uncorrupt schools, universities which have not entirely surrendered the character of educational institutions, and teachers who refuse to become dancing-masters. And, with some at least, the urge to destroy 'School' by depriving it of its character of a serious engagement to learn by study may, perhaps, be interpreted as a misdirected attempt to escape the enormities of 'socialization': when to teach is identified with 'socialization', education becomes the engagement to teach nothing. Caught between these destructive winds of obliquely opposed doctrine our engagement to educate is torn asunder.

Notes and references

1. 'The student with an external vocational referent for his studies always has the possible justification for his most outrageous ideas – that they work.' E. Robinson, *The New Polytechnics*. London: Cornmarket 1968.

2. This nearly meaningless expression, which runs through the history of modern so-called educational theory, has done more than anything else to corrupt our understanding of the educational engagement.

3. Nietzsche: '*Uber die Zukunft unserer Bildungsanstalten*'. I.

4. Hobbes had earlier suggested that this alternative for education should be devoted merely to teaching the duty of 'obedience' to the civil sovereign.

5. In England, even in the early nineteenth century, some of the schools of the National Society and other educational organizations provided for children up to the age of 14; and where this was so foreign languages and even some Latin were sometimes taught.

6. It will be remembered that the terms of reference of the Hadow Committee required it

to consider what had come to be called 'secondary education'; that is, a 'post-primary' alternative to education up to the age of 15. And every page of the report (and not least its historical review) shows its concern with an apprenticeship to adult life which should be agreeable to those who were to enjoy it in reflecting the 'interests' they were imagined to bring with them, and their local 'social and natural environment' should be appropriate to what were assumed to be their limited intellectual capacities, and should reveal the connection between 'life and livelihood'. The Hadow Report was, perhaps, the last to be concerned expressly with an alternative to education.

7. Later inquiries promoted by governments (notably the Newsom Report and the Report on Higher Education, and many of the Working Papers of the Schools Council, e.g. Nos. 7 and 11), while sometimes purporting to be concerned with the educational engagement, have been chiefly concerned with this substitution; that is, with the corruptions of the engagement and the extensions of the alternatives required to make them serve the current 'needs of the nation'.

8. When Thomas Huxley regretted the absence of 'science' from the school *curriculum,* what he regretted was the absence of the opportunity for a learner to acquire an 'outfit drawn from the stores of physical science', 'a knowledge of what physical science has done in the last century'.

9. Renan opposed 'positive science' to the 'superficial humanism' of school education and recognized it as a moral culture.

10. In the confusion of para. 25 of the Report of the Committee on Higher Education it is allowed that a few undergraduates may go to a university for the marginally different extrinsic purpose of acquiring 'pure knowledge' (which also has to be found a 'social function' in order to become visible); but none is credited with going for no extrinsic purpose at all but merely to continue his education, because the possibility of any such activity as being educated is ruled out in advance.

14

(i) THE IDEAL OF THE EDUCATED PERSON

Jane Roland Martin

R.S. Peters calls it an ideal.[1] So do Nash, Kazemias and Perkinson, who, in their introduction to a collection of studies in the history of educational thought, say that one cannot go about the business of education without it.[2] Is it the good life? the responsible citizen? personal autonomy? No, it is the educated man.

The educated man! In the early 1960s, when I was invited to contribute to a book of essays to be entitled *The Educated Man,* I thought nothing of this phrase. By the early 1970s I felt uncomfortable whenever I came across it, but I told myself it was the thought not the words that counted. It is now the early 1980s. Peters's use of the phrase 'educated man' no longer troubles me, for I think it fair to say that he intended it in a gender-neutral way.[3] Despite one serious lapse, which indicates that on some occasions he was thinking of his educated man as male, I do not doubt that the ideal he set forth was meant for males and females alike.[4] Today my concern is not Peters's language but his conception of the educated man – or person, as I will henceforth say. I will begin by outlining Peters's ideal for you and will then show that it does serious harm to women. From there I will go on to argue that Peters's ideal is inadequate for men as well as women and, furthermore, that its inadequacy for men is intimately connected to the injustice it does women. In conclusion I will explore some of the requirements an adequate ideal must satisfy.

Let me explain at the outset that I have chosen to discuss Peters's ideal of the educated person here because for many years Peters has been perhaps *the* dominant figure in philosophy of education. Moreover, although Peters's ideal is formulated in philosophically sophisticated terms, it is certainly not idiosyncratic. On the contrary, Peters claims to have captured our concept of the educated person, and he may well have done so. Thus, I think it fair to say that the traits Peters claims one must possess to be a truly educated person and the kind of education he assumes one must have in order to acquire those traits would, with minor variations, be cited by any number of people today if they were to describe their own conception of the ideal. I discuss Peters's ideal, then, because it has significance for the field of philosophy of education as a whole.

I R.S. Peters's educated person

The starting point of Peters's philosophy of education is the concept of the educated person. While granting that we sometimes use the term 'education' to refer to any process of rearing, bringing up, instructing, etc., Peters distinguishes this very broad sense of 'education' from the narrower one in which he is interested. The concept of the educated person provides the basis for this distinction: whereas 'education' in the broad sense refers to any process of rearing, etc., 'education' in the narrower, and to him philosophically more important, sense refers to the family of processes which have as their outcome the development of an educated person.[5]

Peters set forth his conception of the educated person in some detail in his book, *Ethics and Education.*[6] Briefly, an educated person is one who does not simply possess knowledge. An educated person has a body of knowledge and some kind of conceptual scheme to raise this knowledge above the level of a collection of disjointed facts, which in turn implies some understanding of principles for organizing facts and of the 'reason why' of things. Furthermore, the educated person's knowledge is not inert: it characterizes the person's way of looking at things and involves 'the kind of commitment that comes from getting on the inside of a form of thought and awareness'; that is to say, the educated person cares about the standards of evidence implicit in science or the canons of proof inherent in mathematics. Finally, the educated person has cognitive perspective. In an essay entitled 'Education and the Educated Man,' published several years later, Peters added to this portrait that the educated person's pursuits can be practical as well as theoretical so long as the person delights in them for their own sake, and that both sorts of pursuits involve standards to which the person must be sensitive.[7] He also made it clear that knowledge enters into his conception of the educated person in three ways, namely, depth, breadth and knowledge of good.

In their book, *Education and Personal Relationships,* Downie, Loudfood and Telfer presented a conception of the educated person which is a variant on Peters's.[8] I cite it here not because they too use the phrase 'educated man,' but to show that alternative philosophical conceptions of the educated person differ from Peters's only in detail. Downie, Loudfoot and Telfer's educated person has knowledge which is wide-ranging in scope, extending from history and geography to the natural and social sciences and to current affairs. This knowledge is important, relevant and grounded. The educated person understands what he or she knows, knows how to do such things as history and science, and has the inclination to apply this knowledge, to be critical and to have curiosity in the sense of a thirst for knowledge. Their major departure from Peters's conception – and it is not, in the last analysis, very major – is to be found in their concern with knowledge by acquaintance: the educated person must not merely have knowledge *about* works of art – and, if I understand them correctly, about moral and religious theories – but must know these as individual things.

Consider now the knowledge, the conceptual scheme which raises this knowledge above the level of disjointed facts and the cognitive perspective Peters's educated person must

have. It is quite clear that Peters does not intend that these be acquired through the study of cooking and driving. Mathematics, science, history, literature, philosophy – these are the subjects which constitute the curriculum for his educated person. In short, his educated person is one who has had – and profited from – a liberal education of the sort outlined by Paul Hirst in his famous essay, 'Liberal Education and the Nature of Knowledge.' Hirst describes what is sought in a liberal education as follows:

first, sufficient immersion in the concepts, logic and criteria of the discipline for a person to come to know the distinctive way in which it 'works' by pursuing these in particular cases; and then sufficient generalisation of these over the whole range of the discipline so that his experience begins to be widely structured in this distinctive manner. It is this coming to look at things in a certain way that is being aimed at, not the ability to work out in minute particulars all the details that can be in fact discerned. It is the ability to recognise empirical assertions or aesthetic judgments for what they are, and to know the kind of consideration on which their validity will depend, that matters.[9]

If Peters's educated person is not in fact Hirst's liberally educated person, he or she is certainly its identical twin.

Liberal education, in Hirst's view, consists in an initiation into what he calls the forms of knowledge. There are, on his count, seven of them. Although he goes to some lengths in his later writings on the topic to deny that these forms are themselves intellectual disciplines, it is safe to conclude that his liberally educated person, and hence Peters's educated person, will acquire the conceptual schemes and cognitive perspectives they are supposed to have through a study of mathematics, physical science, history, the human sciences, literature, fine arts, philosophy. These disciplines will not necessarily be studied separately: an interdisciplinary curriculum is compatible with the Peters–Hirst ideal. But it is nonetheless their subject matter, their conceptual apparatus, their standards of proof and adequate evidence, their way of looking at things that must be acquired if the ideal is to be realized.

II Initiation into male cognitive perspectives

What is this certain way in which the educated person comes to look at things? What is the distinctive manner in which that person's experience is structured? A body of literature documenting the many respects in which the disciplines of knowledge ignore or misrepresent the experience and lives of women has developed over the last decade. I cannot do justice here to its range of concerns or its sophisticated argumentation. Through the use of examples, however, I will try to give you some sense of the extent to which the intellectual disciplines incorporate a male cognitive perspective, and hence a sense of the extent to which Hirst's liberally educated person and its twin – Peters's educated person – look at things through male eyes.

Let me begin with history. 'History is past politics' was the slogan inscribed on the

seminar room wall at Johns Hopkins in the days of the first doctoral program.[10] In the late 1960s the historian Richard Hofstaedter summarized his field by saying: 'Memory is the thread of personal identity, history of public identity.' History has defined itself as the record of the public and political aspects of the past; in other words, as the record of the productive processes – man's sphere – of society. Small wonder that women are scarcely mentioned in historical narratives! Small wonder that they have been neither the objects nor the subjects of historical inquiry until very recently! The reproductive processes of society which have traditionally been carried on by women are excluded *by definition* from the purview of the discipline.

If women's lives and experiences have been excluded from the subject matter of history, the works women have produced have for the most part been excluded from literature and the fine arts. It has never been denied that there have been women writers and artists, but their works have not often been deemed important or significant enough to be studied by historians and critics. Thus, for example, Catherine R. Stimpson has documented the treatment accorded Gertrude Stein by two journals which exert a powerful influence in helping to decide what literature is and what books matter.[11] Elaine Showalter, pursuing a somewhat different tack, has documented the double standard which was used in the nineteenth century to judge women writers: all the most desirable aesthetic qualities – for example, power, breadth, knowledge of life; humor – were assigned to men; the qualities assigned to women, such as refinement, fact, precise observation, were not considered sufficient for the creation of an excellent novel.[12]

The disciplines are guilty of different kinds of sex bias. Even as literature and the fine arts exclude women's works from their subject matter, they include works which construct women according to the male image of her. One might expect this tendency to construct the female to be limited to the arts, but it is not. Naomi Weisstein has shown that psychology constructs the female personality to fit the preconceptions of its male practitioners, clinicians either accepting theory without evidence or finding in their data what they want to find.[13] And Ruth Hubbard has shown that this tendency extends even to biology, where the stereotypical picture of the passive female is projected by the male practitioners of that field onto the animal kingdom.[14]

There are, indeed, two quite different ways in which a discipline can distort the lives, experiences and personalities of women. Even as psychology constructs the female personality out of our cultural stereotype, it holds up standards of development for women to meet which are derived from studies using male subjects.[15] Not surprisingly, long after the source of the standards is forgotten, women are proclaimed to be underdeveloped and inferior to males in relation to these standards. Thus, for example, Carol Gilligan has pointed out that females are classified as being at Stage 3 of Kohlberg's six-stage sequence of moral development, because important differences in moral development between males and females are ignored.[16]

In the last decade scholars have turned to the study of women. Thus, historical narratives and analyses of some aspects of the reproductive processes of society – of birth control, childbirth, midwifery, for example – have been published.[17] The existence

of such scholarship is no guarantee, however, of its integration into the mainstream of the discipline of history itself, yet this latter is required if initiation into history as a form of knowledge is not to constitute initiation into a male cognitive perspective. The title of a 1974 anthology on the history of women, *Clio's Consciousness Raised,* is unduly optimistic.[18] Certainly, the consciousness of some historians has been raised, but there is little reason to believe that the discipline of history has redefined itself so that studies of the reproductive processes of society are not simply tolerated as peripherally relevant, but are considered to be as central to it as political, economic and military narratives are. Just as historians have begun to study women's past, scholars in literature and the fine arts have begun to bring works by women to our attention and to reinterpret the ones we have always known.[19] But there is still the gap between feminist scholarship and the established definitions of literary and artistic significance to be bridged, and until it is, the initiation into these disciplines provided by a liberal education will be an initiation into male perspectives.

In sum, the intellectual disciplines into which a person must be initiated to become an educated person *exclude* women and their works, *construct* the female to the male image of her and *deny* the truly feminine qualities she does possess. The question remains of whether the male cognitive perspective of the disciplines is integral to Peters's ideal of the educated person. The answer to this question is to be found in Hirst's essay, 'The Forms of Knowledge Revisited.'[20] There he presents the view that at any given time a liberal education consists in an initiation into *existing* forms of knowledge. Hirst acknowledges that new forms can develop and that old ones can disappear. Still, the analysis he gives of the seven distinct forms which he takes to comprise a liberal education today is based, he says, on our present conceptual scheme. Thus, Peters's educated person is not one who studies a set of ideal, unbiased forms of knowledge; on the contrary, that person is one who is initiated into whatever forms of knowledge exist in the society at that time. In our time the existing forms embody a male point of view. The initiation into them envisioned by Hirst and Peters is, therefore, one in male cognitive perspectives.

Peters's educated person is expected to have grasped the basic structure of science, history and the like rather than the superficial details of content. Is it possible that the feminist critique of the disciplines therefore leaves his ideal untouched? It would be a grave misreading of the literature to suppose that this critique presents simply a surface challenge to the disciplines. Although the examples I have cited here may have suggested to you that the challenge is directed at content alone, it is in fact many pronged. Its targets include the questions asked by the various fields of inquiry and the answers given them; the aims of those fields and the ways they define their subject matter; the methods they use, their canons of objectivity, and their ruling metaphors. It is difficult to be clear on precisely which aspects of knowledge and inquiry are at issue when Hirst speaks of initiation into a form of knowledge. A male bias has been found on so many levels of the disciplines, however, that I think we can feel quite confident that it is a property also of the education embodied in Peters's ideal.

III Genderized traits

The masculinity of Peters's educated person is not solely a function of a curriculum in the intellectual disciplines, however. Consider the traits or characteristics Peters attributes to the educated person. Feelings and emotions only enter into the makeup of the educated person to the extent that being committed to the standards of a theoretical pursuit such as science, or a practical one such as architecture, counts as such. Concern for people and for interpersonal relationships has no role to play: the educated person's sensitivity is to the standards immanent in activities, not to other human beings; an imaginative awareness of emotional atmosphere and interpersonal relationships need be no part of this person's makeup, nor is the educated person thought to be empathetic or supportive or nurturant. Intuition is also neglected. Theoretical knowledge and what Woods and Barrow – two more philosophers who use the phrase 'educated man' – call 'reasoned understanding' are the educated person's prime characteristics:[21] even this person's practical pursuits are to be informed by some theoretical perspectives; moreover, this theoretical bent is to be leavened neither by imaginative nor intuitive powers, for these are never to be developed.

The educated person as portrayed by Peters, and also by Downie, Loudfoot and Telfer, and by Woods and Barrow, coincides with our cultural stereotype of a male human being. According to that stereotype men are objective, analytic, rational; they are interested in ideas and things; they have no interpersonal orientation; they are neither nurturant nor supportive, empathetic nor sensitive. According to the stereotype, nurturance and supportiveness, empathy and sensitivity are female attributes. Intuition is a female attribute too.[22]

This finding is not really surprising. It has been shown that psychologists define moral development, adult development and even human development in male terms and that therapists do the same for mental health.[23] Why suppose that philosophers of education have avoided the androcentric fallacy?[24] Do not misunderstand! Females *can* acquire the traits and dispositions which constitute Peters's conception of the educated person; he espouses an ideal which, if it can be attained at all, call be by both sexes.[25] But our culture associates the traits and dispositions of Peters's educated person with males. To apply it to females is to impose on them a masculine mold. I realize that as a matter of fact some females fit our male stereotype and that some males do not, but this does not affect the point at issue, which is that Peters has set forth an ideal for education which embodies just those traits and dispositions our culture attributes to the male sex and excludes the traits our culture attributes to the female sex.

Now it might seem that if the mold is a good one, it does not matter that it is masculine, that if the traits which Peters's educated person possesses are desirable, then it makes no difference that in our society they are associated with males. Indeed, some would doubtless argue that in extending to women cognitive virtues which have long been associated with men and which education has historically reserved for men, Peters's theory of education strikes a blow for sex equality. It does matter that the traits Peters assigns the educated person are considered in our culture to be masculine, however. It matters because some

traits which males and females can both possess are *genderized*; that is, they are appraised differentially according to sex.[26]

Consider aggressiveness. The authors of a book on assertiveness training for women report that in the first class meetings of their training courses they ask their students to call out the adjectives which come to mind when we say 'aggressive woman' and 'aggressive man.' Here is the list of adjectives the women used to describe an aggressive man: 'masculine,' 'dominating,' 'successful,' 'heoric,' 'capable', 'strong,' 'forceful,' 'manly.' Need I tell you the list of adjectives they used to describe an aggressive woman?: 'harsh,' 'pushy,' 'bitchy,' 'domineering,' 'obnoxious,' 'emasculating,' 'uncaring.'[27]

I submit to you that the traits Peters attributes to the educated person are, like the trait of aggressiveness, evaluated differently for males and females. Imagine a woman who is analytical and critical, whose intellectual curiosity is strong, who cares about the canons of science and mathematics. How is she described? 'She thinks like a man,' it is said. To be sure, this is considered by some to be the highest accolade. Still, a woman who is said to think like a man is being judged to be masculine, and since we take masculinity and femininity to lie at opposite ends of a single continuum, she is thereby being judged to be lacking in femininity.[28] Thus, while it is possible for a woman to possess the traits of Peters's educated person, she will do so at her peril: her possession of them will cause her to be viewed as unfeminine, i.e. as an unnatural or abnormal woman.

IV A double bind

It may have been my concern over Peters's use of the phrase 'educated man' which led me to this investigation in the first place, but as you can see, the problem is not one of language. Had Peters consistently used the phrase 'educated person' the conclusion that the ideal he holds up for education is masculine would be unaffected. To be sure, Peters's educated person can be male or female, but he or she will have acquired male cognitive perspectives and will have developed traits which in our society are genderized in favor of males.

I have already suggested that Peters's ideal places a burden on women because the traits constituting it are evaluated negatively when possessed by females. The story of Rosalind Franklin, the scientist who contributed to the discovery of the structure of DNA, demonstrates that when a woman displays the kind of critical, autonomous thought which is an attribute of Peters's educated person, she is derided for what are considered to be negative unpleasant characteristics.[29] Rosalind Franklin consciously opted out of 'woman's sphere' and entered the laboratory. From an abstract point of view the traits she possessed were quite functional there. Nonetheless she was perceived to be an interloper, an alien who simply could not be taken seriously in relation to the production of new, fundamental ideas no matter what her personal qualities might be.[30]

But experiencing hostility and derision is the least of the suffering caused women by Peters's ideal. His educated person is one who will know nothing about the lives women

have led throughout history and little if anything about the works or art and literature women have produced. If his educated person is a woman, she will have been presented with few female role models in her studies whereas her male counterpart will be able to identify with the doers and thinkers and makers of history. Above all, the certain way in which his educated man and woman will come to look at the world will be one in which men are perceived as they perceive themselves and women are perceived as men perceive them.

To achieve Peters's ideal one must acquire cognitive perspectives through which one sex is perceived on its own terms and one sex is perceived as the Other.[31] Can it be doubted that when the works of women are excluded from the subject matter of the fields into which they are being initiated, students will come to believe that males are superior and females are inferior human beings? That when in the course of this initiation the lives and experiences of women are scarcely mentioned, students will come to believe that the way in which women have lived and the things women have done throughout history have no value? Can it be doubted that these beliefs do female students serious damage? The woman whose self-confidence is bolstered by an education which transmits the message that females are inferior human beings is rare. Rarer still is the woman who, having been initiated into alien cognitive perspectives, gains confidence in her own powers without paying the price of self-alienation.

Peters's ideal puts women in a double bind. To be educated they must give up their own way of experiencing and looking at the world, thus alienating themselves from themselves. To be unalienated they must remain uneducated. Furthermore, to be an educated person a female must acquire traits which are appraised negatively when she possesses them. At the same time, the traits which are evaluated positively when possessed by her – for example, being nurturant and empathetic – are excluded from the ideal. Thus a female who has acquired the traits of an educated person will not be evaluated positively for having them, while one who has acquired those traits for which she will be positively evaluated will not have achieved the ideal. Women are placed in this double bind because Peters's ideal incorporates traits genderized in favor of males and excludes traits genderized in favor of females. It thus puts females in a no-win situation. Yes, men and women can both achieve Peters's ideal. However, women suffer, as men do not, for doing so.

Peters's masculine ideal of the educated person harms males as well as females, however. In a chapter of the 1981 NSSE Yearbook I argued at some length that Hirst's account of liberal education is seriously deficient.[32] Since Peters's educated person is to all intents and purposes Hirst's liberally educated person, let me briefly repeat my criticism of Hirst here. The Peters–Hirst educated person will have knowledge about others, but will not have been taught to care about their welfare, let alone to act kindly toward them. That person will have some understanding of society, but will not have been taught to feel its injustices or even to be concerned over its fate. The Peters–Hirst educated person is an ivory tower person: a person who can reason yet has no desire to solve real problems in the real world; a person who understands science but does not worry about the uses to which it is put; a person who can reach flawless

moral conclusions but feels no care or concern for others.

Simply put, quite apart from the burden it places on women, Peters's ideal of the educated person is far too narrow to guide the educational enterprise. Because it presupposes a divorce of mind from body, thought from action, and reason from feeling and emotion, it provides at best an ideal of an educated *mind,* not an educated *person.* To the extent that its concerns are strictly cognitive however, even in that guise it leaves much to be desired.

V Education for productive processes

Even if Peters's ideal did not place an unfair burden on women it would need to be rejected for the harm it does men, but its inadequacy as an ideal for men and the injustice it does women are not unconnected. In my Yearbook essay I sketched in the rough outlines of a new paradigm of liberal education, one which would emphasize the development of persons and not simply rational minds; one which would join thought to action, and reason to feeling and emotion. I could just as easily have called it a new conception of the educated person. What I did not realize when I wrote that essay is that the aspects of the Peters–Hirst ideal which I found so objectionable are directly related to the role, traditionally considered to be male, which their educated person is to play in society.

Peters would vehemently deny that he conceives of education as production. Nonetheless, he implicitly attributes to education the task of turning raw material, namely the *un*educated person, into an end-product whose specifications he sets forth in his account of the concept of the educated person. Peters would deny even more vehemently that he assigns to education a societal function. Yet an examination of his conception of the educated person reveals that the end-product of the education he envisions is designed to fit into a specific place in the social order: that he assigns to education the function of developing the traits and qualities and to some extent the skills of one whose role is to use and produce ideas.[33]

Peters would doubtless say that the production and consumption of ideas is everyone's business and that an education for this is certainly not an education which fits people into a particular place in society. Yet think of the two parts into which the social order has traditionally been divided. Theorists have put different labels on them, some referring to the split between work and home, others to the public and private domains and still others to productive and reproductive processes.[34] Since the public/private distinction has associations for educators which are not germaine to the present discussion while the work/home distinction obscures some important issues, I will speak here of productive and reproductive processes. I do not want to make terminology the issue, however. If you prefer other labels, by all means substitute them for mine. My own is only helpful, I should add, if the term 'reproduction' is construed broadly. Thus I use it here to include not simply biological reproduction of the species, but the whole process of reproduction from conception until the individual reaches more or less independence from the family.[35] This process I take to include not simply childcare and rearing, but the related activities of

keeping house, running the household and serving the needs and purposes of all the family members. Similarly, I interpret the term 'production' broadly to include political, social and cultural activities and processes as well as economic ones.

Now this traditional division drawn within the social order is accompanied by a separation of the sexes. Although males and females do in fact participate in both the reproductive and productive processes of society, the reproductive processes are considered to constitute 'woman's sphere' and the productive processes 'man's sphere.' Although Peters's educated person is ill-equipped for jobs in trades or work on the assembly line, this person is tailor-made for carrying on certain of the productive processes of society, namely those which require work with heads, not hands. Thus his educated person is designed to fill a role in society which has traditionally been considered to be male. Moreover, he or she is not equipped by education to fill roles associated with the reproductive processes of society, i.e. roles traditionally considered to be female.

Once the functionalism of Peters's conception of the educated person is made explicit, the difficulty of including in the ideal feelings and emotions such as caring and compassion, or skills of cooperation and nurturance, becomes clear. These fall under our culture's female stereotype. They are considered to be appropriate for those who carry on the reproductive processes of society but irrelevant, if not downright dysfunctional, for those who carry on the productive processes of society. It would therefore be irrational to include them in an ideal which is conceived of solely in relation to productive processes.

I realize now, as I did not before, that for the ideal of the educated person to be as broad as it should be, the two kinds of societal processes which Peters divorces from one another must be joined together.[36] An adequate ideal of the educated person must give the reproductive processes of society their due. An ideal which is tied solely to the productive processes of society cannot readily accommodate the important virtues of caring and compassion, sympathy and nurturance, generosity and cooperation, which are genderized in favor of females.

To be sure, it would be possible in principle to continue to conceive of the educated person solely in relation to the productive processes of society while rejecting the stereotypes which produce genderized traits. One could include caring and compassion in the ideal of the educated person on the grounds that although they are thought to be female traits whose home is in the reproductive processes of society, they are in fact functional in the production and consumption of ideas. The existence of genderized traits is not the only reason for giving the reproductive processes of society their due in an ideal of the educated person, however. These processes are themselves central to the lives of each of us and to the life of society as a whole. The dispositions, knowledge, skills required to carry them out well are not innate, nor do they simply develop naturally over time. Marriage, childrearing, family life: these involve difficult, complex, learned activities which can be done well or badly. Just as an educated person should be one in whom head, hand and heart are integrated, he or she should be one who is at home carrying on the reproductive processes of society, broadly understood, as well as the productive processes.

Now Peters might grant that the skills, traits, and knowledge necessary for carrying on

reproductive processes are learned – in some broad sense of the term, at least – but argue that one does not require an education in them for they are picked up in the course of daily living. Perhaps at one time they were picked up in this way, and perhaps in some societies they are now. But it is far from obvious that, just by living, most adults in our society today acquire the altruistic feelings and emotions, the skills of childrearing, the understanding of what values are important to transmit and which are not, and the ability to put aside one's own projects and enter into those of others, which are just a few of the things required for successful participation in the reproductive processes of society.

That education is needed by those who carry on the reproductive processes is not in itself proof that it should be encompassed by a conception of the educated person, however, for this conception need not be all-inclusive. It need not be all-inclusive but, for Peters, education which is not guided by his ideal of the educated person scarcely deserves attention. Moreover, since a conception of the educated person tends to function as an ideal, one who becomes educated will presumably have achieved something worthwhile. Value is attached to being an educated person: to the things an educated person knows and can do; to the tasks and activities that person is equipped to perform. The exclusion of education for reproductive processes from the ideal of the educated person thus carries with it an unwarranted negative value judgment about the tasks and activities, the traits and dispositions which are associated with them.

VI Redefining the ideal

An adequate ideal of the educated person must give the reproductive processes of society their due, but it must do more than this. After all, these processes were acknowledged by Rousseau in Book V of *Emile*.[37] There he set forth two distinct ideals of the educated person, the one for Emile tied to the productive processes of society and the one for Sophie tied to the reproductive processes. I leave open here the question Peters never asks of whether we should adopt one or more ideals of the educated person.[38] One thing is clear, however. We need a conception which does not fall into the trap of assigning males and females to the different processes of society, yet does not make the mistake of ignoring one kind of process altogether. We all participate in both kinds of processes and both are important to all of us. Whether we adopt one or many ideals, a conception of the educated person which is tied only to one kind of process will be incomplete.

An adequate ideal of the educated person must also reflect a realistic understanding of the limitations of existing forms or disciplines of knowledge. In my Yearbook chapter I made a case for granting them much less 'curriculum space' than Hirst and Peters do. So long as they embody a male cognitive perspective, however, we must take into account not simply the amount of space they occupy in the curriculum of the educated person, but the hidden messages which are received by those who are initiated into them. An ideal of the educated person cannot itself rid the disciplines of knowledge of their sex bias. But it can advocate measures for counteracting the harmful effects on students of coming to see things

solely through male eyes.

The effects of an initiation into male cognitive perspectives constitute a hidden curriculum. Alternative courses of action are open to us when we find a hidden curriculum and there is no reason to suppose that only one is appropriate. Let me say a few words here, however, about a course of action that might serve as at least a partial antidote to the hidden curriculum transmitted by an education in male-biased disciplines.[39] When we find a hidden curriculum we can show it to its recipients; we can raise their consciousness, if you will, so that they will know what is happening to them. Raising to consciousness the male cognitive perspective of the disciplines of knowledge in the educated person's curriculum is no guarantee, of course, that educated females will not suffer from a lack of self-confidence and from self-alienation. Yet knowledge can be power. A curriculum which, through critical analysis, exposes the biased view of women embodied in the disciplines and which, by granting ample space to the study of women shows how unjust that view is, is certainly preferable to a curriculum which, by its silence on the subject, gives students the impression that the ways in which the disciplines look at the world are impartial and unbiased.

Now it might seem to be a relatively simple matter both to give the reproductive processes of society their due in an ideal of the educated person and to include in that ideal measures for counteracting the hidden curriculum of an education in the existing disciplines of knowledge. Yet given the way philosophy of education conceives of its subject matter today, it is not. The produtive– reproductive dualism is built not simply into Peters's ideal but into our discipline.[40] We do not even have a vocabulary for discussing education in relation to the reproductive processes of society, for the distinction between liberal and vocational education which we use to cover the kinds of education we take to be philosophically important applies within productive processes: liberal and vocational education are both intended to fit people to carry on productive processes, the one for work with heads and the other for work with hands. The aims of education we analyze – critical thinking, rationality, individual autonomy, even creativity – are also associated in our culture with the productive, not the reproductive, processes of society. To give the reproductive processes their due in a conception of the educated person we will have to rethink the domain of philosophy of education.

Given the way we define our subject matter it is no more possible for us to take seriously the hidden curriculum I have set before you than the reproductive processes of society. Education, as we conceive of it, is an intentional activity.[41] Teaching is too.[42] Thus, we do not consider the unintended outcomes of education to be our concern. Moreover, following Peters and his colleagues, we draw a sharp line between logical and contingent relationships and treat the latter as if they were none of our business even when they are the *expected* outcomes of educational processes.[43] In sum, we leave it to the psychologists, sociologists and historians of education to worry about hidden curricula, not because we consider the topic unimportant – although perhaps some of us do – but because we consider it to fall outside our domain.

The redelinition of the subject matter of philosophy of education required by an adequate

ideal of the educated person ought not to be feared. On the contrary, there is every reason to believe that it would ultimately enrich our discipline. If the experience and activities which have traditionally been considered to belong to women are included in the educational realm, a host of challenging and important issues and problems will present themselves for study. If the philosophy of education tackles questions about childrearing and the transmission of values, if it develops accounts of gender education to inform its theories of liberal education, if it explores the forms of thinking, feeling and acting associated with childrearing, marriage and the family, if the concepts of coeducation, mothering and nurturance become fair game for philosophical analysis, philosophy of education will be invigorated.

It would also be invigorated by taking seriously contingent as well as logical relationships. In divorcing educational processes from their empirical consequences and the mental structures which are said to be intrinsically related to knowledge from the empirical consequences of having them, we forget that education is a practical endeavor. It is often said that philosophy of education's concerns are purely conceptual, but the conclusion is inescapable that in analyzing such concepts as the educated person and liberal education we make recommendations for action. For these to be justified the contingent relationships which obtain between them and both the good life and the good society must be taken into account. A redefinition of our domain would allow us to provide our educational theorizing with the kind of justification it requires. It would also allow us to investigate the particularly acute and very challenging value questions that arise in relation to hidden curricula of all kinds.

VII Conclusion

In conclusion I would like to draw for you two morals which seem to me to emerge from my study of Peters's ideal of the educated person. The first is that Plato was wrong when, in Book V of the *Republic,* he said that sex is a difference which makes no difference.[44] I do not mean by this that there are inborn differences which suit males and females for separate and unequal roles in society. Rather, I mean that identical educational treatment of males and females may not yield identical results so long as that treatment contains a male bias. There are sex differences in the way people are perceived and evaluated and there may well be sex differences in the way people think and learn and view the world. A conception of the educated person must take these into account. I mean also that the very nature of the ideal will be skewed. When sex or gender is thought to make no difference, women's lives, experiences, activities are overlooked and an ideal is formulated in terms of men and the roles for which they have traditionally been considered to be suited. Such an ideal is necessarily narrow, for it is rooted in stereotypical ways of perceiving males and their place in society.

For some time I assumed that the sole alternative to a sex-biased conception of the educated person such as Peters set forth was a gender-free ideal, that is to say an ideal

which did not take sex or gender into account. I now realize that sex or gender has to be taken into account if an ideal of the educated person is not to be biased. To opt at this time for a gender-free ideal is to beg the question. What is needed is a *gender-sensitive* ideal, one which takes sex or gender into account when it makes a difference and ignores it when it does not. Such an ideal would truly be gender-just.

The second moral is that *everyone* suffers when an ideal of the educated person fails to give the reproductive processes of society their due. Ideals which govern education solely in relation to the productive processes of society will necessarily be narrow. In their failure to acknowledge the valuable traits, dispositions, skills, traditionally associated with reproductive processes, they will harm both sexes although not always in the same ways.[45]

Notes

1. R.S. Peters, 'Education and the Educated Man,' in R.F. Dearden, P.H. Hirst and R.S. Peters (eds) *A Critique of Current Educational Aims* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), pp. 7, 9.

2. Paul Nash, Andreas M. Kazemias and Henry J. Perkinson (eds) *The Educated Man: Studies in the History of Educational Thought* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1965), p. 25.

3. For a discussion of 'man' as a gender-neutral term see Janice Moulton, 'The Myth of the Neutral "Man",' in Mary Vetterling-Braggin, Frederick A. Elliston and Jane English (eds) *Feminism and Philosophy* (Totowa, NJ: Littlefield, Adams, 1977), pp. 124–37. Moulton rejects the view that 'man' has a gender-neutral use.

4. Peters, 'Education and the Educated Man,' p. 11. Peters says in connection with the concept of the educated man: 'For there are many who are not likely to go far with theoretical enquiries and who are unlikely to develop much depth or breadth of understanding to under-pin and transform their dealings as workers, *husbands* and *fathers'* (emphasis added).

5. *Ibid.,* p. 7.

6. R.S. Peters, *Ethics and Education* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1966). Page references are to the American edition published by Scott, Foresman and Company, 1967.

7. Peters, 'Education and the Educated Man,' pp. 9–11.

8. R.S. Downie, Eileen M. Loudfoot and Elizabeth Telfer, *Education and Personal Relationships* (London: Methuen & Co., 1974), p. 11ff.

9. In Paul Hirst, *Knowledge and the Curriculum* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), p. 47 and in this volume, Paper 12(i), p. 261.

10. Nancy Schrom Dye, 'Clio's American Daughters,' in Julia A. Sherman and Evelyn Torton Beck (eds) *The Prism of Sex* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1979), p. 9.

11. Catherine R. Stimpson, 'The Power to Name,' in Sherman and Beck (eds) *The Prism of Sex,* pp. 55–77.

12. Elaine Showalter, 'Women Writers and the Double Standard,' in Vivian Gornick and Barbara Moran (eds) *Women in Sexist Society* (New York: Basic Books, 1971), pp. 323–43.

13. Naomi Weisstein, 'Psychology Constructs the Female,' in Gornick and Moran (eds) *Women*

in Sexist Society, pp. 133–46.

14. Ruth Hubbard, 'Have Only Men Evolved?' in Ruth Hubbard, Mary Sue Henifin and Barbara Fried (eds) *Women Look at Biology Looking at Women* (Cambridge, Mass.: Schenkman Publishing Co., 1979), pp. 7–35.

15. Carol Gilligan, 'Women's Place in Man's Life Cycle,' *Harvard Educational Review* 49, 4 (1979): 431–46.

16. Carol Gilligan, 'In a Different Voice: Women's Conceptions of Self and of Morality;' *Harvard Educational Review* 47, 4 (1979): 481–517.

17. See, for example, Linda Gordon, *Woman's Body, Woman's Right: A Social History of Birth Control in America* (New York: Viking, 1976); Richard W. Wertz and Dorothy C. Wertz, *Lying-In* (New York: Free Press, 1977); Jean Donnison, *Midwives and Medical Men: A History of Interprofessional Rivalries and Women's Rights* (New York: Schocken Books, 1977).

18. Mary Hartman and Lois W. Banner (eds) *Clio's Consciousness Raised* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974).

19. See, for example, Carolyn G. Heilbrun, *Toward a Recognition of Androgyny* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1973); Patricia Meyer Spacks, *The Female Imagination* (New York: Avon, 1975); Ellen Moers, *Literary Women* (New York: Anchor Books, 1977); Elaine Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Bronte to Lessing* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977); Ann Sutherland Harris and Linda Nochlin, *women Artists: 1550– 1950* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976); Elsa Honig Fine, *Women and Art: A History of Women Painters and Sculptors from the Renaissance to the Twentieth Century* (Montclair and London: Allanheld & Schram/Prior, 1978); and Karen Peterson and J.J. Wilson, *Women Artists: Recognition and Reappraisal from the Early Middle Ages to the Twentieth Century* (New York: New York University Press, 1976).

20. In Paul Hirst, *Knowledge and the Curriculum,* p. 92.

21. R.G. Woods and R. St. C. Barrow, *An Introduction to Philosophy of Education* (Methuen & Co., 1975), ch. 3.

22. For discussions of our male and female stereotypes see, e.g., Alexandra G. Kaplan and Joan P. Bean (eds) *Beyond Sex-Role Stereotypes* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1976); and Alexandra G. Kaplan and Mary Anne Sedney, *Psychology and Sex Roles* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1980).

23. Carol Gilligan, 'Women's Place'; I. Broverman, D. Broverman, F. Clarkson, P. Rosencrantz and S. Vogel, 'Sex-role Stereotypes and Clinical Judgements of Mental Health,' *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 34 (1970): 1–7; Alexandra G. Kaplan, 'Androgyny as a Model of Mental Health for Women: From Theory to Therapy,' in Kaplan and Bean (eds) *Beyond Sex-Role Stereotypes,* pp. 353–62.

24. One commits the androcentric fallacy when one argues from the characteristics associated with male human beings to the characteristics of all human beings. In committing it one often commits the naturalistic fallacy, because the traits which are said to be natural to males are held up as ideals for the whole species.

25. I say *if* it can be attained by all, because it is not entirely clear that the ideal can be attained by *anyone* insofar as it requires mastery of Hirst's seven forms of knowledge.

26. See Elizabeth Beardsley, 'Traits and Genderization,' in Vetterling-Braggin *et al.* (eds) *Feminism and Philosophy,* pp. 117–23. Beardsley uses the term 'genderization' to refer to language while I use it here to refer to traits themselves.

27. Lynn Z. Bloom, Karen Coburn and Joan Pearlman, *The New Assertive Woman* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1975), p. 12.

28. For discussion of the assumptionn that masculinity–femininity is a bipolar dimension see Anne Constantinople, 'Masculininity–Femininity: An Exception to a Famous Dictum'; and Sandra L. Bem, 'Probing the Promise of Androgyny,' in Kaplan and Bean (eds) *Beyond Sex-Role Stereotypes*.

29. Anne Sayre, *Rosalind Franklin & DNA* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1975). See also James D. Watson, *The Double Helix* (New York: Atheneum, 1968); and Horace Freeland Judson, *The Eighth Day of Creation* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1979).

30. It is important to note, however, that some colleagues did take her seriously as a scientist; see Sayre, *ibid.* Adele Simmons cites historical evidence of the negative effects of having acquired such traits on women who did not opt out of 'woman's sphere' in 'Education and Ideology in Nineteenth-Century America: The Response of Educational Institutions to the Changing Role of Women,' in Berenice A. Carroll (ed.) *Liberating Women's History* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1976), p. 123. See also Patricia Meyer Spacks, *The Female Imagination* (New York: Avon Books, 1976), p. 25.

31. See Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (New York: Bantam Books, 1961) for an extended discussion of woman as the Other.

32. Jane Roland Martin, 'Needed: A Paradigm for Liberal Education,' in Jonas F. Soltis (ed.) *Philosophy and Education* (Chicago: National Society for the Study of Education, 1981), pp. 37–59, reprinted in this volume, Paper 12(ii).

33. For an account of education as production see Jane Roland Martin, 'Sex Equality and Education: A Case Study,' in Mary Vetterling-Braggin (ed.) *'Femininity,' 'Masculinity,' and 'Androgyny'* (Totowa, NJ: Littlefield, Adams, 1982). It should be noted that an understanding of the societal role for which Peters's educated person is intended illuminates both the sex bias and the class bias his ideal embodies.

34. For an interesting discussion and criticism of the two-sphere analysis of society, see Joan Kelly, 'The Doubled Vision of Feminist Theory: A Postscript to the "Women and Power" Conference,' *Feminist Studies* 5, 1 (1979): 216–27. Kelly argues that a two-sphere analysis distorts reality and that feminist theory should discard it. I use it here as a convenient theoretical device.

35. I am indebted here to Lorenne M.G. Clark, 'The Rights of Women: The Theory and Practice of the Ideology of Male Supremacy,' in William R. Shea and John King-Farlow (eds) *Contemporary Issues in Political Philosophy* (New York: Science History Publications, 1976), pp. 49–65.

36. In saying that an adequate conception of the educated person must reject a sharp separation of productive and reproductive processes I do not mean that it must be committed to a specific philosophical theory of the relationship of the two. An adequate conception of the educated person should not divorce mind and body, but it does not follow from this that it

must be committed to a specific view of the mind– body relationship; indeed, the union of mind and body in a theory of education is quite compatible with a dualistic philosophical account of the relationship between the two. Similarly, a theory of the educated person must not divorce one kind of societal process from the other even if the best account of the relationship of productive to reproductive processes should turn out to be dualistic.

37. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile* (New York: Basic books, 1979, Allan Bloom, trans.). See also Lynda Lange, 'Rousseau: Women and the General Will,' in Lorenne M.G. Clark and Lynda Lange (eds) *The Sexism of Social and Political Theory* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), pp. 41–52; Susan Moller Okin, *Women in Western Political Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979); and Jane Roland Martin 'Sophie and Emile: A Case Study of Sex Bias in the History of Educational Thought,' *Harvard Educational Review* 51, 3 (1981): 357–72.

38. I also leave open the question of whether *any* ideal of the educated person should guide and direct education as a whole.

39. For more on this question see Jane Roland Martin, 'What Should We Do with a Hidden Curriculum When We Find One?' *Curriculum Inquiry* 6, 2 (1976): 135–51, reprinted in Volume IV of this set, Paper 24.

40. On this point see Jane Roland Martin 'Excluding Women from the Educational Realm.'

41. See, for example, Peters, *Ethics and Education.*

42. See, for example, Israel Scheffler, *The Language of Education* (Springfield, Ill.: Charles C. Thomas, 1960), Chs. 4, 5.

43. For a discussion of this point see Jane Roland Martin 'Response to Roemer,' in Jerrold R. Coombs (ed.) *Philosophy of Education 1979* (Normal, Ill.: Proceedings of the 35th Annual Meeting of the Philosophy of Education Society, 1980).

44. This point is elaborated on in Jane Roland Martin, 'Sex Equality and Education: A Case Study.'

45. I wish to thank Ann Diller, Carol Gilligan, Michael Martin and Janet Farrell Smith for helpful comments on earlier versions of this address, which was written while I was a Fellow at the Mary Ingraham Bunting Institute of Radcliffe College.

(ii) GENDERIZED COGNITIVE PERSPECTIVES AND THE REDEFINITION OF PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

Harvey Siegel

Jane Roland Martin, in a series of forceful, impressive, and important recent papers,[1] has leveled a blistering attack on philosophy of education, especially contemporary analytic philosophy of education (henceforth CAPE). Martin's critique covers a wide range of topics, including philosophy of education's neglect of the curriculum, its faulty historiography, its conception of a liberal education, its conception of the educated person, and, perhaps most centrally, its inadequate treatment of women. More specifically, Martin argues that the conception of education offered by CAPE excludes women from the educational realm; that its ideal of the educated person is 'self-alienating' to women; that it is wedded to a 'male cognitive perspective' or male bias; that its generally accepted views on curriculum are deficient, due mainly to what Martin calls the 'epistemological fallacy'; that these views tend to support the development of 'ivory tower people'; that the standard account of teaching, which Martin calls the 'rationality theory' of teching, is inadequate; and that all of these failings are so basic that the very discipline of philosophy of education needs to be restructured or reconstituted.[2]

It would be difficult to overestimate the seriousness of these charges. If Martin is right, the entire enterprise of philosophy of education is off track and stands in need of radical revision. In what follows my aim is to assess Martin's critique of CAPE. I shall argue that, while there is much of value in Martin's analysis, frequently her criticisms are overstated, and that CAPE need not go about the business of redefining itself in the way that Martin suggests. I shall argue that her discussion of cognitive perspective is flawed, and that her conclusion that CAPE is in the grip of a male cognitive perspective is unwarranted; that her claim that R.S. Peters's ideal of the educated person is self-alienating to women is mistaken; and that the rationality theory of teaching survives her criticisms. Finally, I will suggest that while CAPE does indeed suffer from serious weaknesses and is intellectually suspect, its weaknesses stem not from sex bias, but from an inadequate conception of analysis, an erroneous conception of the relationship between philosophy of education and 'pure' philosophy, and an undue unwillingness to

consider questions of educational aims. Even so, it is not the case, as Martin alleges, that the very 'structure of the discipline' is in need of redefinition.[3]

A final preliminary note is in order. Martin seems to be trying to do for philosophy of education what many others have tried to do for other disciplines, such as art, history, philosophy, psychology, and so on – namely, she is trying to demonstrate that philosophy of education, like those other disciplines, suffers from a male bias and is slanted against women and women's experience. I applaud this effort, and want at the outset to grant the feminist point: If there is such bias, it is to be deplored and ought to be eliminated. We ought, I agree with Martin, to see to it that philosophy of education is not sexist. I am in full support of the social and political goals of feminism. It is precisely because these goals are so important, however, that arguments made in support of them be as strong and compelling as possible. Unfortunately, as I shall argue, Martin's arguments do not yield the conclusions regarding disciplinary sexism that she draws. It is Martin's arguments, not her feminism, that I want to challenge here, and it is in a spirit supportive of feminism that I offer the following criticism.

Self-alienation, male cognitive perspective, and the ideals of the educated person

In her recent presidential address to the Philosophy of Education Society,[4] Martin argues that the ideal of the educated person put forward by R.S. Peters is seriously deficient. In particular, Martin claims that Peters's ideal is harmful to women in that a woman educated in accordance with the ideal is, to the extent that she achieves the ideal, likely to become 'self-alienated' (since her own traits and dispositions are not sanctioned by the ideal, and the traits and dispositions promulgated by the ideal are not achieved by women without a great deal of internal stress).

Peters's educated person is one who possesses knowledge and a conceptual scheme that serves to organize both that knowledge and that person's 'way of looking at things.'[5] Knowledge is here taken to be knowledge in depth and breadth, and includes moral knowledge ('knowledge of good'[6]). Knowledge here is also to be knowledge of the sort one would get from a Hirstian liberal education: that is, knowledge of mathematics, science, literature, history, and so forth. In fact, Martin detects an isomorphism between Peters's educated person and Hirst's liberally educated person: 'If Peters's educated person is not in fact Hirst's liberally educated person, he or she is certainly its identical twin.'[7] It is knowledge of the traditional disciplines and 'their subject matter, their conceptual apparatus, their standards of proof and adequate evidence, their way of looking at things that must be acquired if [Hirst's and Peters's] ideal is to be realized.'[8]

Martin argues against Peters's ideal that the cognitive perspective engendered by the disciplines and achieved by Peters's educated person is an unhappy one for women, for the disciplines embody a 'male cognitive perspective,' and, Martin argues, 'ignore or misrepresent the experience and lives of women.'[9] Consequently, an educated person,

by the lights of Peters's ideal, looks at things 'through male eyes.'[10] After briefly describing the findings of several feminist scholars regarding the 'male bias' of the disciplines, Martin summarizes them in claiming that 'the intellectual disciplines into which a person must be initiated to become an educated person *exclude* women and their works, *construct* the female to the male image of her and *deny* the truly feminine qualities she does possess.'[11] Since Peters's ideal has educated persons initiated into existing forms of knowledge and since those existing forms in fact embody a male perspective, Peters's ideal recommends for all educated persons the adoption of that male perspective.[12]

Moreover, Martin argues that Peters's conception of the educated person

> coincides with our cultural stereotype of a male human being. According to that stereotype men are objective, analytic, rational; they are interested in ideas and things; they have no interpersonal orientation; they are neither nurturant nor supportive, neither empathetic nor sensitive. According to the stereotype nurturance and supportiveness, empathy and sensitivity are female attributes. Intuition is a female attribute too.[13]

Martin is quick to point out that 'females *can* acquire the traits and dispositions which constitute Peters's conception of the educated person; he espouses an ideal which, if it can be attained at all, can be by both sexes.'[14] Nevertheless, this fact 'does not affect the point at issue which is that Peters has set forth an ideal for education which embodies just those traits and dispositions our culture attributes to the male sex and excludes the traits our culture attributes to the female sex.'[15]

In due course I will consider whether Martin's portrayal of Peters's ideal is fair to Peters. Can it be said that Peters's ideal corresponds with our cultural stereotype of a male as Martin describes it when Peters explicitly demands, for example, that moral education include the development of empathy and compassion? When his most central criticism of Kohlberg is that Kohlberg mistakenly neglects the (lack of) connection between moral reasoning and moral action? When he praises what he calls the 'rational passions'? Do these features of Peters's ideal of the educated person really coincide, as Martin claims, with our male cultural stereotype? The answer is not so clear as Martin suggests. I shall return to this point. First, let us finish detailing Martin's argument. She grants that both females and males can attain to the same extent Peters's ideal. The obvious next question, which Martin herself poses, is: why then berate Peters's ideal? If the traits possessed by Peters's educated person are good, should we not regard it as a worthy ideal despite its alleged overlap with our male cultural stereotype? Indeed, why is it not the case that, in Martin's words, 'in extending to women cognitive virtues which have long been associated with men and which education has historically reserved for men, Peters's theory of education strikes a blow for sex equality'?[16] Martin's answer is that 'the traits Peters attributes to the educated person are . . . evaluated differently for

males and females.'[17] That is, they are *genderized*: appraised differentially according to sex. In particular, traits Peters's ideal promulgates – rationality, analyticity, criticality, concern for the canons of science and math – are, Martin suggests, appraised positively for males but negatively for females. An educated woman, as judged by Peters's standards, is judged to be masculine and unfeminine, an 'unnatural or abnormal woman.'[18] Such women, Martin contends, are placed in a 'double bind' and are made to feel self-alienated, for to be educated they must adopt a male perspective and so must 'give up their own way of experiencing and looking at the world, thus alienating themselves from themselves. To be unalienated they must remain uneducated.'[19] Moreover, an educated woman must acquire traits that are negatively evaluated when possessed by her, and to give up traits that would be positively evaluated when possessed by her, since Peters's ideal excludes them. As Martin puts it, 'men and women can both achieve Peters's ideal. However, women suffer, as men do not, for doing so.'[20] For this reason, and for others, Martin argues that we ought to reject Peters's ideal of the educated person. And since philosophy of education suffers from the productive/reproductive dualism that Martin claims is at the root of Peters's ideal, she suggests that full eradication of the problem demands our rethinking of the very domain of philosophy of education, and the redefinition of its subject matter.[21]

These are weighty conclusions indeed. Despite Martin's articulate and powerful presentation, however, there are several serious weaknesses in her argument that make acceptance of those conclusions problematic. Consider first Martin's claim that the disciplines embrace a male cognitive perspective. Is it the case that the disciplinary cognitive perspective is *male*? What does this claim come to? In Martin's discussion the disciplinary cognitive perspective is male, or masculine, in two ways: first, it captures or embodies the way men look at things, or sees things 'through male eyes';[22] second, it idealizes those traits that in our society are judged positively for males (but negatively for females), and that in fact are central to our cultural stereotype of a male human being. These two ways of a discipline's cognitive perspective being male are quite distinct, and in fact each way leads to trouble for Martin's analysis. For the first way – that there is a male way of looking at things – is false under the interpretation Martin seems to give it; and the second way – that the disciplines ideally embody traits and dispositions that our society judges to be positive for males – is true, but fails to secure the conclusion Martin wishes to infer from it.

Consider first the first sense of 'male cognitive perspective' just mentioned. Is it the case that there is a male way of looking at things? It is not clear that this first way of being male is a way of being male at all. Martin's claim that there is a specifically male way of looking at things (and, for that matter, her claim that there are '*truly feminine* equalities'[23]) is simply false, if that is taken to mean that all and only males share or naturally develop that particular perspective. The perspective Martin labels male is one that emphasizes objectivity, rationality, analyticity, concern for logical rigor and argumentation, etc. Yet none of us would say that all and only men achieve, develop, or

approve of these traits. Martin herself claims that the traits and dispositions she is calling male can be achieved equally well by both sexes.[24] Moreover, Martin's papers themselves eloquently refute the claim that women cannot achieve these traits. So it cannot be that there are certain unique and mutually exclusive perspectives, through one of which all males view things, and through another of which all females do. There is no genetic determination of sex-bound cognitive perspective.

If this much is correct, the force of Martin's claim that the disciplinary cognitive perspective is male must rest on the second interpretation of male cognitive perspective: it is male not in that all and only males achieve or naturally develop it, but in that it idealizes those traits that in our society are judged positively for males (but negatively for females), that in fact are central to our cultural stereotype of a male, and that men are encouraged to develop through processes of socialization. Here I think Martin is undeniably correct. That is, it is undeniable that our society does genderize traits as Martin claims. But this fact is in no way capable of undermining Peters's ideal of the educated person.

Recall that Peters's ideal is deficient, according to Martin, because it places women in a double bind and causes them to become self-alienated. To the extent that women achieve the traits and dispositions favored by Peters's ideal, they are judged negatively, as unfeminine; while to the extent that women manage to maintain society's judgment of them as feminine, or normal women, they must be judged uneducated in the light of Peters's ideal. Now this double bind is surely a real one, and a painful one, for women, but it is important to analyze rightly the source of this suffering. Martin locates the source in Peters's ideal. I want to suggest that the responsibility for the suffering lies not with Peters's ideal, but with societal genderized evaluation of the various traits and dispositions that ideal recommends.

A woman who achieves and cares about objectivity, rationality, analysis and canons of empirical and logical rigor becomes self-alienated because those traits and dispositions are judged negatively with respect to women. But Peters's ideal teaches women to value and try to achieve them nonetheless. Therein lies the double bind: Peters's ideal and society's genderized evaluations are in conflict. If society's judgments are taken as fixed – that is, if we grant that society's judgments regarding 'truly feminine qualities'[25] are appropriate and proper, or if we grant, as Martin seems to be claiming, that some qualities are truly feminine – then placing responsibility for the suffering created by the double bind on Peters's ideal seems unavoidable. But taking society's judgments as fixed in either of these ways seems to me a mistake. It is not the case that qualities being urged as truly feminine are so – they are neither the exclusive property of women, in the sense that all and only women naturally acquire them; nor are they such that women, but not men, ought to achieve them. It is not the case (nor, as I will argue, is it Peters's contention) that men ought not to be, for example, empathetic or nurturing. Moreover, while it is true that society does not regard such qualities as male, and judges men with such qualities negatively, as unmasculine or effeminate, we surely need not simply settle for society's

judgments on these matters. We can challenge society's judgments on these issues and argue that, societal judgments notwithstanding, empathetic and nurturing men and rational women should not be judged negatively. In fact, in the case of 'unfeminine' males, we do challenge societal judgments. If, for example, a nonempathetic, nonnurturing male defended his ways by arguing that being empathetic and nurturing would cause him to suffer and to be self-alienated, since society judges men with such traits as unmasculine, we would surely – and rightly – reject this defense, for we regard these traits as good traits, for men as well as women, and reject the contrary societal judgment. Martin it seems would agree. But if the self-alienation defense fails for unfeminine men, it fails for unmasculine women as well.[26] Consequently, we err if we find fault with Peters's ideal on the grounds that it leads to the self-alienation of women, for the fault lies not with the ideal, but with erroneous and damaging genderized societal evaluations. Peters's ideal looks bad here only because it encourages women to have traits – good traits – that society mistakenly regards as traits that are bad for women to have.

The problem then, to reiterate, is not with Peters's ideal, but with society's erroneous judgments regarding the goodness of traits – and the willingness of women and men to accept uncritically those erroneous judgments. Indeed, if Peters's ideal were taken seriously, and women (as well as men) encouraged to be critical and rational, the double bind would not arise, since women would recognize that it is the erroneous ideal of femininity proffered by society that errantly grounds the inappropriate and unnecessary self-alienation.[27] In this way the existence of the double bind calls for a commitment to Peters's ideal, not a rejection of it. For a woman who achieves rationality is in a better position to rationally reject an indefensible societal ideal of femininity than a woman who cannot subject that ideal to critical scrutiny.

As a feminist, I reject the idea that rationality is a positive quality for males only. This seems to me to sell women's rational capabilities far too short. But in any case, as I have been arguing, we should not regard society's genderized evaluations as fixed. Rather, we should regard them as *wrong*. And so we should not reject Peters's ideal for the reasons Martin offers us. Peters's ideal can then be seen as striking 'a blow for sex equality' – both by extending the domain of rationality to women and explicitly holding that women can be rational, and by challenging a societal evaluation that has been the cause of much injustice and suffering and is in great need of challenge. Martin's argument depends on the acceptance of society's genderized evaluations – in particular, its judgment that rationality is unfeminine. But she (and we) should not accept it. It is this genderized evaluation, not Peters's ideal, that is the problem; self-alienation results from pernicious societal judgments, not from faulty philosophical ideals.

A further consideration of cognitive perspectives

I argued briefly that it is improper to regard the disciplinary cognitive perspective as male if by that is meant that such a perspective is one that all and only males share or

naturally develop. There are additional problems with Martin's regarding the disciplinary cognitive perspective as male.

One problem has to do with the assumption that all the disciplines or rational traditions Peters and Hirst would have us initiated into are alike with respect to cognitive perspective. Martin writes, for example, that 'the intellectual disciplines into which a person must be initiated to become an educated person *exclude* women and their works, *construct* the female to the male image of her and *deny* the truly feminine qualities she does possess.'[28] Can this be said of disciplines such as physics or mathematics, which do not treat of women or men – at all? These disciplines, which do not take humans of either gender as subject matter, seem innocent of the charges Martin presses against them. Indeed, it would be hard to imagine what physics or mathematics as seen through a female cognitive perspective would be like. Would the Peano axioms be different? The subject matter of real analysis? The theory of quantum chromodynamics? Would a female cognitive perspective not regard these intellectual achievements as bona fide achievements?

If those questions are answered in the negative, then we must conclude that the several disciplines do not share a unitary cognitive perspective. If some of the disciplines do indeed embrace a male cognitive perspective, others do not, as they do not issue in gender statements or take women (or men) as subject matter. But if different disciplines embrace different cognitive perspectives, the blanket claim (just cited) Martin makes regarding 'the intellectual disciplines into which a person must be initiatied'[29] must be qualified, and the underlying assumption that there is a unitary cognitive perspective that the disciplines share must be given up. For while it is no doubt true that some of the 'disciplines of knowledge ignore or misrepresent the experience and lives of women,'[30] some disciplines, especially mathematics and the physical sciences, are simply and legitimately unconcerned with the lives and experiences of women (and men). This point suggests, in turn, that Martin's use of the notion of cognitive perspective is not especially precise or careful. I shall return to this point.

Philosophy of education and male cognitive perspective

Of particular interest is Martin's claim that philosophy of education is itself suffering from a bad case of male cognitive perspective. Martin argues that women

> are excluded both as the subjects and objects of educational thought from the standard texts and anthologies: as subjects, their philosophical works on education are ignored; as objects, works by men about their education and also their role as educators of the young are largely neglected. Moreover, the very definition of education and the educational realm adopted implicitly by the standard texts, and made explicit by contemporary analytic

philosophers of education, excludes women.[31]

Martin argues first that philosophy of education has excluded women as objects of educational thought. Thus she writes that 'Pestalozzi's insight that mothers are educators of their children and that we can learn from their methods has been largely ignored in educational philosophy.'[32] In addition, Martin claims that women have also been excluded as subjects of educational thought – that is, 'women philosophers of education have been overlooked'[33] by philosophers of education, their philosophical contributions ignored. Martin singles out Maria Montessori as such a neglected woman philosopher, as well as Mary Wollstonecraft, Catherine Macauley, Catharine Beecher, and Charlotte Perkins Gilman.[34]

Now I must confess that I have no special love for the standard view of the history of philosophy of education. I would be happy to add to the list of important philosophers of education the women Martin mentions, as I would be happy to delete from the list men whose contribution to philosophy of education is questionable. But on what basis is such a list constructed? What criteria must a philosopher of education – woman or man – meet, in order to be placed on the list? Martin agrees that 'criteria do have to be satisfied'[35] before the women she mentions are properly included, but she offers no suggestion as to what these criteria might be. Moreover, her discussion of this matter involves a serious equivocation between 'educational philosophy' and 'educational thought,' suggesting that persons 'who have thought systematically about education'[36] are *ipso facto* to be regarded as philosophers of education. This, however, will not do, unless we are willing to allow all systematic thought about education (whatever 'systematic' might mean) to count as philosophy of education, and all thinkers about education to count as philosophers. That this would force us to regard people such as John Holt, Jonathan Kozol, Patricia Graham, David Tyack, W. James Popham, David K. Cohen, Judy Blume, Robert W. Cole, Jr, Jesse Jackson, and Walter Mondale as philosophers of education is sufficient reason to reject Martin's identification of 'educational thinker' with 'educational philosopher.' How then is this distinction to be drawn? I would argue that philosophy of education is marked out by its distinctive (though not unitary) methods; by its concern with a certain set of questions that, as with all philosophical questions, cannot be decisively settled on empirical grounds; by its connection with other philosophical concerns and areas, such as epistemology, metaphysics, axiology, ethics, and social and political philosophy; by its connection with a certain body of literature; and so forth. But my concern at the moment is not to establish a definitive list of criteria by which we can demarcate the educationally philosophical. It is rather to argue that without some such list of criteria by which to so demarcate, argument concerning whether this or that person ought to be considered a philosopher of education is bound to be uncompelling. Yet Martin offers such argument without offering such criteria. In fact, Martin admits that the works of the women she mentions 'must be studied and their significance determined before one can be sure that

they should be included in the standard texts and anthologies. This analytic and evaluative endeavor remains to be done.'[37] But if Martin is not willing to say, on the basis of analysis and evaluation, that these candidates have been unjustly excluded, how can it be obvious that such exclusion is in fact unjust? In short, until Martin can make a convincing case that some women have unjustly been excluded from the standard anthologies and texts – that is, until she can show that some women have in fact made serious contributions to philosophy of education (and not educational thought) – her charge that philosophy of education excludes women as subjects must be considered unfounded.[38]

Martin's charge that philosophy of education excludes women as objects is also problematic, for she neglects to say what it is about women's lives and experiences that is as such germane to philosophy of education. Having said nothing concerning criteria by which to determine whether some subject is or is not a bona fide concern of philosophy of education, Martin nevertheless insists that 'women's experiences' – which she tends to equate with what she calls reproductive processes – are improperly excluded by philosophers of education from consideration. But she has given us no reason to regard reproductive processes as *philosophically* significant. Why should reproductive processes be regarded as a topic of concern for philosophy of education? Why is philosophy of education mistaken for ignoring such processes, when physics or psychology is not? Martin's argument depends crucially on her offering some criteria by which to recognize topics as having significance for philosophy of education. But she offers no such criteria, and her argument for regarding reproductive processes as philosophically significant seems at times to come down simply to the point that women are involved in them, as if that fact by itself is sufficient to qualify those processes as philosophical.[39] Of course such a fact does no such thing, any more than the fact that men are involved in them make football or oil drilling topics of concern for philosophy of education. Without some general notion of what makes a topic a topic of moment for philosophy of education, Martin's charge that philosophy of education mistakenly fails to concern itself with reproductive processes will remain unconvincing, for some such notion is crucial to establishment of the charge. Martin's claim depends entirely on her view of what is to count as important for philosophy of education, but she never seriously explores this topic. Without such consideration, however, her argument is impotent to secure her conclusion.[40] (For the sake of clarity, I wish to emphasize that I am not arguing that philosophy of education should ignore reproductive processes, but only that Martin has given us no compelling argument that it should not.)

In the light of all this it is difficult to assent to Martin's claims that CAPE is 'a servant of patriarchal policy,' and that 'the paradigms of analytic philosophy of education do not apply to . . . women.'[41] Of course they do: Women can be initiated into the main intellectual traditions, can be rational and critical, and so on. The paradigms of CAPE do indeed apply to women – and men. It is only Martin's erroneous identification of these traits as male that lend her polemic what plausibility it has. Martin claims that CAPE 'make[s] women and their activities and experiences invisible,'[42] but she has not shown

that those activities and experiences are properly thought of as *women's* at all, that the particular women she mentions ought to be regarded as important philosophers of education, or that reproductive processes are of genuine philosophical interest. Indeed, while views about what counts as genuinely philosophical play a central role in her overall critique of CAPE, Martin never seriously addresses the task of setting out criteria or offering argument by which to establish a work, issue, topic, or thesis as genuinely philosophical. But, as I argued earlier, without addressing this task, criticisms of CAPE for neglecting topics and concerns inappropriately can only be seen as unfounded. Moreover, Martin's claim that central tenets of CAPE, including Peters's conception of education, 'derive from male experience'[43] depends for its force on the faulty claim that only males are capable of male experience. Martin's own work gives the lie to the view that what she regards as male experience is truly *male.* In short, Martin's arguments that CAPE suffers from male cognitive perspective or male bias must be rejected. The arguments Martin provides simply do not establish their conclusions.

Male experience and the rationality theory of teaching

Martin also criticizes the 'rationality theory of teaching,' which she claims stems from a misplaced focus on male experience. The rationality theory of teaching has it that 'teaching is . . . an initiation into open rational discussion,'[44] and that to teach

> is at some points at least to submit oneself to the understanding and independent judgment of the pupil, to his demand for reasons, to his sense of what constitutes an adequate explanation . . . . Teaching involves further that, if we try to get the student to believe that such and such is the case, we try also to get him to believe it for reasons that, within the limits of his capacity to grasp, are *our* reasons. Teaching, in this way, requires us to reveal our reasons to the student, and, by so doing, to submit them to his evaluation and criticism.[45]

Martin argues that this theory of teaching, in its emphasis on engaging the reason of the child and on the production of justifying reasons by the teacher, renders much of what goes on in child rearing nonteaching: 'Most of the teaching and learning which takes place in relation to the reproductive processes of society do not fit these criteria [of the rationality theory].'[46] She complains in addition that, because there are some situations in which the production of reasons is otiose or impossible, and that the aim of the child rearer is nonetheless perfectly justifiable, activities meeting the criteria of the rationality theory will not be rational: 'Thus there are many contexts in which an activity meeting the requirements of the rationality theory of teaching will not be rational from the standpoint of the demands of the particular context.'[47]

Martin's first complaint, that the rationality theory renders much of child rearing activity nonteaching, is not at all compelling. For one thing, her assumption that these activities *are* cases of teaching is gratuitous and question-begging. If the issue being considered is whether certain activities constitute teaching, simply assuming that they do is question-begging against the rationality theory, which holds that they do not. Moreover, Martin's assumption is groundless: she offers no reason for regarding those activities as teaching activities, except her implicit reason that such activities contribute to the education and development of the child. But unless she is prepared to argue that everything that so contributes counts as teaching – a dubious proposition indeed – this implicit reason does not aid her cause.

Martin's second complaint, that in some contexts acting in accordance with the rationality theory would be irrational, is surely right, but is utterly forceless as an argument against the rationality theory. For what it shows is simply that in such contexts teaching is irrational. The rationality theory does not say 'only teach,' as if the development of habits and character traits or the instilling of values in very young children, for example, is a bad thing. It simply holds that such activities, while eminently worthwhile and central to a child's development, do not constitute teaching.

Besides misinterpreting the rationality theory in this way, Martin's discussion betrays a serious misunderstanding of the relationship between the concepts of teaching and learning. After detailing activities that are central to child rearing and reproductive processes, and which are clearly part of child development, Martin writes: 'Yet, if the teacher's reasons are not revealed or the learner's rationality is not acknowledged, the rationality theory denies the labels of "teacher" and "learner" to the parties involved.'[48] Now we have already considered Martin's error with respect to the label 'teacher': she has given us no reason to think that these activities must always be properly regarded as *teaching* activities, and so her use of 'teacher' here, as earlier, is both question-begging and gratuitous. But her mention of the label 'learner' deserves additional comment. It is simply false that the rationality theory holds that if the teacher has not taught, the learner has not learned. That is, it is false that the rationality theory holds that teaching is a necessary and sufficient condition of learning. One can learn all sorts of things in all sorts of ways; learning need not be the result of teaching. (We all have learned, for example, what the weather is like today. Who has taught us that?) So Martin is simply mistaken in taking the rationality theory to hold that when the label 'teacher' is inappropriate, the label 'learner' is as well.

Lurking behind Martin's criticism of the rationality theory is a lack of appreciation of the motivation for that theory of teaching. In articulating and defending the rationality theory, most have focused on the need for any sound analysis of teaching to distinguish that mode of bringing about the acquiring of beliefs in the student from other modes of student belief-acquisition. In the passage Martin cites, for example, Scheffler begins by noting that beliefs 'can be acquired through mere unthinking contact, propaganda, indoctrination, or brainwashing.'[49] We might add to this list methods such as torture,

deception, training, lying, threatening, conditioning, manipulating, and so on. Scheffler goes on to note that teaching as the rationality theory portrays it is differentiated from these other modes of belief inculcation by its focus on the role reason plays for the student and the teacher, such reason being unnecessary for, and in some cases necessarily absent from, these other modes. Even in the case of activities 'which take place in relation to the reproductive processes of society,'[50] there is room for, and need for, distinctions to be drawn between these various modes of belief acquisition and inculcation. Yet Martin's discussion is entirely devoid of such distinctions and of even the recognition of their appropriateness and necessity. In this regard Martin's discussion is a giant step backward from analyses like Scheffler's and Green's,[51] which are devoted in large part to articulating and drawing out the implications for education of the distinctions between the various modes of belief acquisition and inculcation. Even if Martin is right that some activities that the rationality theory does not regard as teaching activities ought to be so regarded – and, as we have seen, she has offered no compelling reason for thinking so – her analysis is blind to these educationally crucial distinctions. In this respect it muddies waters that analysis has helped to clear.[52]

The 'bottom line' of Martin's criticism of the rationality theory of teaching is that it is based on cases that are 'derived solely from male experience'[53] and 'makes the educational activities of mothers, and by implication mothers themselves, appear nonrational, if not downright irrational.'[54] But it is not derived solely from male experience, for that experience is not, as I argued earlier, properly understood as male. More importantly, the rationality theory does not in the least make the educational activities of mothers, and mothers themselves, appear nonrational or irrational. It only holds that activities that do not meet its criteria be regarded as *nonteaching* activities. There is much that is nonteaching, however, that is rational, and in no way does the rationality theory imply that persons engaged in nonteaching activities are irrational. We must conclude then that the rationality theory of teaching easily survives Martin's criticisms.

Yet another problem concerning cognitive perspectives

There is a further difficulty with Martin's treatment of the notion of cognitive perspective that deserves mention. Martin is offering arguments against what she takes to be CAPE's male cognitive perspective. She wants us to be convinced of her conclusion, and to be so for good reason. Now if Martin is simply assuming or adopting an alternative, female cognitive perspective, she could rightly be charged with begging the question, since she would be assuming her conclusion (that the male cognitive perspective is inadequate or inferior). But then we ought not to be convinced, on the basis of good reason, of her conclusion. So the principle of charity demands that we interpret Martin to be not question-beggingly assuming a rival cognitive perspective from which to challenge the male cognitive perspective, but rather adopting an objective cognitive meta-perspective,

which is neutral as between the male cognitive perspective and its rivals, and from which she can fairly criticize and assess male and other first-order cognitive perspectives. What would such a second-order meta-perspective be like? In order for it to be capable of fair and proper assessment of first-order perspectives, it must at a minimum be neutral with respect to alternative first-order perspectives, it must be objective, it must evaluate in accordance with or on the basis of reason, and so on – otherwise, its evaluations would be either question-begging or baseless. So the second-order perspective must be thought to embody at least the standard philosophical ideals of objectivity and rationality. But then how is that meta-perspective different from the first-order male cognitive perspective Martin wants to criticize? For the male perspective Martin challenges takes those ideals to be central. (Martin might argue that the two differ in that the male cognitive perspective fails to incorporate female experience. But, as I argued earlier, this response will not do, for rationality – or rational experience – is not male, or nonfemale, in the requisite sense.)

Thus Martin is caught on the horns of a dilemma. Either her argument is launched from a female cognitive perspective, in which case it is question-begging against the male perspective, and so is impotent as a criticism of that male perspective; or else her argument is grounded in a neutral meta-perspective that respects the demands of impartiality, objectivity, and rationality – those very ideals held dear by the male cognitive perspective, in which case she is assuming the very cognitive perspective she wishes to argue against.

This is a real and serious problem for Martin, a problem noted (and charitably dealt with) by Professor McClellan in his response to Martin's presidential address.[55] For Martin is engaged in the task of rational analysis, which, as McClellan notes, 'presuppose[s] criteria that are neither male nor female.'[56] She seems, however, at least at some points, to be claiming that analysis and rationality are themselves sex-bound. The problem then is that Martin's project presupposes that rationality is not male, but her claims, especially her discussion of male cognitive perspective, often suggest that it is.

I strongly suspect that were Martin to come to grips with the dilemma I have sketched, she would locate the difficulty in the very notion of 'cognitive perspective,' which is left unanalyzed by Martin and which is an extremely vague and slippery notion. I believe that investigation would show that that notion, when used as Martin uses it, is incoherent, or at any rate cannot do the work Martin requires of it. I agree with McClellan that the notion of cognitive perspective is 'untenable entirely'[57] – though not necessarily for the reasons McClellan offers. In any case, it seems clear that Martin's analysis suffers from a fundamental difficulty on this point.

Peters and Hirst; reason, action, emotion; and ivory tower people

Earlier I suggested that Martin's portrayal of Peters's ideal of the educated person was not quite fair to Peters. Martin's account, recall, has it that Peters's ideal coincides

with our cultural stereotype of a male human being in calling for no role for emotions or feelings; in not valuing empathy, sensitivity, compassion, nurturance, or other 'arational' traits. In addition, Martin argues that Peters's ideal and its twin, Hirst's ideal of a liberally educated person, place no value on acting in the world, but only thinking. As Martin says of Hirst's conception:

> The received theory's liberally educated person will be taught to see the world through the lenses of the seven forms of knowledge, if seven there be, but not to act in the world. Nor will that person be encouraged to acquire feelings and emotions. The theory's liberally educated person will be provided with knowledge about others, but will not be taught to care about their welfare, let alone to act kindly toward them. That person will be given some understanding of society, but will not be taught to feel its injustices or even to be concerned over its fate.[58]

And with respect to Hirst's twin, Peters: 'Peters's educated person is intended to inhabit a world in which feelings and emotions such as caring, compassion, empathy, and nurturance have no legitimate role to play.'[59] Finally, bringing the two together:

> The Peters–Hirst educated person is an ivory tower person: a person who can reason yet has no desire to solve real problems in the real world; a person who understands science but does not worry about the uses to which it is put; a person who can reach flawless moral conclusions but feels no care or concern for others.[60]

Has Martin fairly described Peters's and Hirst's conceptions here? Let us consider Peters first. I take it as uncontroversial that Peters regards moral education as part of education. Martin's claim that Peters's ideal does not allow any room for caring, compassion, empathy, and so on thus implies that, according to Peters, these emotions and feelings have no role to play in moral education. Yet, as anyone acquainted with Peters's writings on moral education knows, these emotions and feelings have a central role in Peters's conception of moral education. He takes for granted that a key aim of moral educationn is the development or moral *conduct*.[61] In criticizing Kohlberg, Peters complains that 'Kohlberg pays too little attention' to 'a central aspect of morality . . . namely, the intimate connection between knowing the difference between right and wrong, and *caring*.'[62] He writes further that he regards the question 'How do children come to care?' as 'the most important question in moral education.'[63] He chides Kohlberg for being 'particularly weak on the development of the affective side of morality, of moral emotions,'[64] and complains that Kohlberg does not deal adequately with the development of will in morality, which Peters regards as central because of its role in fostering moral action.[65] Moreover, leaving moral education now and focusing on the general question of

the relationship between reason and emotion, in Peters's book *Reason and Compassion*[66] – whose title alone spells trouble for Martin's interpretation – Peters explicitly denounces the sharp separation between reason and emotion that Martin attributes to him. He writes, for example, that 'the antithesis between reason and passion is misconceived';[67] he speaks of the importance of, and indeed the necessity of, the emotions in undergirding reason, and of the inseparability of reason and its 'appropriate passions.'[68] In short, Martin badly misconstrues Peters's position on the relation between reason and the emotions, on the role of the emotions in education, and on the relationship between thought and action. Martin's claims that Peters denies the emotions a legitimate role in education, that Peters divorces reason from emotion, and that he divorces reason (and emotion) from action are simply false. Martin has only selectively attended to Peters here, and has ignored that portion of Peters's work which challenges her interpretation.[69]

Martin's portrayal of Hirst fares no better. She claims that Hirst's conception of the liberally educated person also divorces thought from emotion and action, resulting in ivory tower people. But Hirst's liberally educated person, like Peters's educated person, has mastered moral judgment, which relies on an appreciation of feelings and emotions. In any case, Martin's identification of Hirst's and Peters's conceptions as 'twins' spell trouble for her analysis of Hirst here, for if the two conceptions are isomorphic, as Martin claims, and if Peters's conception, contrary to Martin's, does not divorce reason from emotion or action, then it follows that Hirst does not either. That is to say, Martin can retain her criticism of Hirst only by retracting her 'twins' analysis.

Conclusion

Martin's discussion of the 'epistemological fallacy' – the view that the theory of knowledge is sufficient to determine the curriculum – I find compelling and agree with Martin that normative considerations, particularly those concerning the aims of education, are highly relevant to the determination of the curriculum. What this shows is that philosophy of education needs to reassert the legitimacy, and indeed the primacy, of questions concerning the aims of education.

But to claim this is not to claim that philosophy of education needs to be 'redefined,' 'restructured,' or 'reconstituted,' all these being terms used by Martin to describe what needs to be done to philosophy of education. Martin's arguments for restructuring, redefining, and reconstituting do not warrant such sweeping conclusions.

Martin argues, for example, that the exclusion of women and the reproductive processes of society 'is a consequence of the structure of the discipline' of philosophy of education, and that 'the very subject matter of the field must be redefined.'[71] But her argument to that end relies wholly on her criticism of Hirst and Peters, as if these two philosophers constituted the discipline. Martin actually suggests that this is the case. She writes, for example, that Peters's conception of education and the educated person 'defines the domain'[72] of CAPE, and that Hirst's conception of the liberally educated

person along with Peters's conception 'are accepted in general outline by the field of philosophy of education.'[73] Martin's suggestion is that to differ with Peters and Hirst is to cease to do philosophy of education as it is currently 'structured.' But this is simply false. Martin is confusing the discipline of philosophy of education with the theses of two of its practitioners. Note that this is true even if Martin is right that all or most philosophers of education accept those theses – even universal acceptance of the theses within the discipline does not warrant the identification of the theses with the discipline. Even if it did, Martin's identification would still be in trouble, for many 'CAPE-ers' have criticized those theses. (I mention D.C. Phillips, Robert Halstead, and Martin herself as noteworthy examples.) So Martin's identification of philosophy of education as a discipline with the particular theses of a particular pair of writers must be rejected. It is not the case that these theses are universally accepted within the discipline, and even if it were, the identification would not be called for.

There is, moreover, a related problem concerning the notions of restructure, reconstitute, and redefine that Martin is appealing to. What is it, exactly, to restructure or redefine a discipline? Is it simply to change a prevailing view, or is it more fundamental than that? Was physics restructured or redefined in the shift from Newton to Einstein, or from Rutherford to Bohr? Was philosophy of science redefined in the shift from Carnap to Kuhn? The answer to these questions depends on what is meant by restructuring and redefinition. Even if these terms are taken weakly, to mean we should reject Peters's and Hirst's conceptions – a view with which I am not unsympathetic – Martin has not successfully made the case for restructuring, since, as I have tried to show, her arguments regarding exclusion, self-alienation, and so on simply fail to establish their conclusions. If Martin means by those terms something stronger than a simple rejection of Peters or Hirst – perhaps, for example, that we should change our views about the constitution of philosophy and/or philosophy of education – then the case for restructuring is even less successful. It must be concluded that Martin's sweeping claims regarding the restructuring, redefining, and rethinking the domain of philosophy of education are simply unsuccessful, and that her call for the radical alteration of the discipline is uncalled for.

Postscript

Does this mean that Peters's and Hirst's conceptions are correct, or that philosophy of education is in the pink? Not at all. My own view shares with Martin's the conviction that there are fundamental problems with CAPE, and with Hirst's and Peters's conceptions. These fundamental problems include, first, an overreliance on a particular sort of analysis, often called 'ordinary-language' analysis, in which the main weight of an argument rests on a locution like 'it would be odd to say . . .' Such a method of argument relies far too heavily on an undue regard for ordinary usage, and an unwillingness to countenance alternative usage in the service of inquiry. At the risk of

being accused of 'physics envy,' let me simply note where we would be if we were unwilling to take seriously linguistic oddities regarding the bending of space or the 'smearing out' in space-time of certain elementary particles. This infatuation with ordinary-language analysis, and its subservience to ordinary usage, is, I believe, a prime cause of the sterility of much philosophy of education, including that of Peters and Hirst. Another fundamental problem is philosophy of education's tenuous relation to so-called pure philosophy.[74] Yet another problem (and here I agree with Martin) is an aversion to normative inquiry concerning educational aims, practices, and outcomes. Analysis is not incompatible with normative concerns, contrary to conventional analytical wisdom, and I regard the articulation and defense of educational aims as a central focus of philosophy of education. But these points must wait for their development until another day.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1. Jane Roland Martin, 'Needed: A New Paradigm for Liberal Education,' in *Philosophy and Education: The Eightieth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education,* Jonas F. Soltis (ed.) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), pp. 37–59, reprinted in this volume, Paper 12(ii), to which all page references refer; *idem,* 'Sophie and Emile: A Case Study of Sex Bias in the History of Educational Thought,' *Harvard Educational Review* 51 (August 1981): 357–72; *idem,* 'Two Dogmas of Curriculum,' *Synthese* 51 (April 1984) 5–20; *idem,* 'The Ideal of the Educated Person,' in *Philosophy of Education 1981: Proceedings of the Thirty-Seventh Annual Meeting of the Philosophy of Education Society,* Daniel K. DeNicola (ed.) (Normal, Ill.: Philosopy of Education Society, 1982), pp. 3–20, reprinted in *Educational Theory* 31 (Spring 1981): 97–109, reprinted in Volume II of this set, Paper 14(i), to which all page references refer; *idem,* 'Excluding Women from the Educational Realm,' *Harvard Educational Review* 52 (May 1982): 133–48; and *idem,* 'Sex Equality in Education: A Case Study,' in *'Femininity,' 'Masculinity,' and 'Androgyny': A Model Philosophical Discussion,* Mary Vetterling-Braggin (ed.) (Totowa, NJ: Littlefield, Adams, 1982) pp. 279–300.
2. Martin, 'Excluding Women,' pp. 146–8.
3. *Ibid.,* p. 148.
4. Martin, 'The Ideal of the Educated Person.'
5. *Ibid.,* p. 312.
6. *Ibid.*

7. *Ibid.,* p. 313.

8. *Ibid.*

9. *Ibid.,* p. 314.

10. *Ibid.*

11. *Ibid.,* p. 315, emphasis in original.

12. *Ibid.*

13. *Ibid.,* p. 316.

14. *Ibid.,* pp. 316–17, emphasis in original.

15. *Ibid.*

16. *Ibid.*

17. *Ibid.*

18. *Ibid.,* p. 318.

19. *Ibid.,* p. 319.

20. *Ibid.*

21. *Ibid.,* pp. 322–3.

22. *Ibid.,* p. 314.

23. *Ibid.,* p. 315, emphasis added.

24. *Ibid.,* p. 317.

25. *Ibid.,* p. 315.

26. I am grateful to Edward Mooney for suggesting this point.

27. I do not mean to suggest that this would he easy for women. After all, societal influences are strong. I only mean to suggest that Peters's ideal, if achieved, would tend to undercut those societal judgments that underlie the double bind Martin describes.

28. Martin, 'The Ideal of the Educated Person,' p. 315, emphasis in original.

29. *Ibid.*

30. Martin, 'The Ideal of the Educated Person,' p. 314.

31. Martin, 'Excluding Women,' p. 134.

32. *Ibid.,* p. 135.

33. *Ibid.*

34. *Ibid.,* pp. 135–6.

35. *Ibid.,* p. 136.

36. *Ibid.*

37. *Ibid.*

38. This is so even for Martin's best case, that of Montessori. Martin writes that 'Montessori's claim to inclusion in the standard texts and anthologies is apparent, for her philosophical works on the education of children are widely known' ('Excluding Women,' p. 135). But are these works really *philosophical*? Martin offers no criteria for demarcating works of philosophy of education from other educational works. According to the criteria I have briefly sketched in the text, Montessori's works would not count as examples of philosophy of education, though they surely would count as examples of systematic educational thought. (Perhaps this explains Martin's puzzlement concerning the fact that, of all the

anthologies she considers, only Robert S. Rusk's *The Doctrines of the Great Educators* [New York: St Martin's Press, 1965, revised 3rd edition] includes a consideration of Montessori. Rusk's volume does not explicitly limit itself to philosophy of education; most of the others do.)

39. *Cf.,* for example, Martin, 'Excluding Women,' pp. 140, 142.

40. Martin lays the blame for CAPE's neglect of reproductive processes largely on the conceptions of education and liberal education developed by R.S. Peters and Paul Hirst. See Martin, 'Excluding Women,' pp. 138–42. She notes, and deplores, the judgment that Pestalozzi's character Gertrude's interactions with her children do not invariably count, given Peters's conception of education, as educational interactions, but she never says why they should so count. Moreover, Martin suggests that, due to the narrowness of Peters's conception of education, questions concerning the transmission of values – regarding, for example, the meaning of 'transmission,' the values that ought to be transmitted, the relative rights of parents and schools to transmit values, and so on – cannot even be raised by CAPE (140). But this is simply false. Such questions can, and are, raised by CAPE (to cite just one example, in discussions of the moral and educational acceptability of values, clarification programs), and put into glaring relief Martin's forced analysis according to which the narrowness of Peters's conception of education amounts to his exclusion of reproductive processes from that conception. I agree with Martin that these are important questions, but it is simply false that CAPE cannot raise and attempt to deal with them. If these are indeed questions concerning philosophical dimensions of reproductive processes, then the fact that CAPE can and does raise them stands as a powerful refutation of Martin's claim that CAPE excludes reproductive processes from its domain.

41. Martin, 'Excluding Women,' p. 145.

42. *Ibid.*

43. *Ibid.,* p. 146.

44. Israel Scheffler, 'Concepts of Education: Reflections on the Current Scene,' in his *Reason and Teaching* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1973), p. 62. Cited in Martin, 'Excluding Women,' p. 143.

45. Israel Scheffler, *The Language of Education* (Springfield, Ill.: Thomas, 1960), p. 57, emphasis in original. Cited in Martin, 'Excluding Women,' p. 143.

46. Martin, 'Excluding Women,' p. 144.

47. *Ibid.*

48. *Ibid.*

49. Scheffler, 'Concepts of Education,' p. 62.

50. Martin, 'Excluding Women,' p. 144.

51. Thomas F. Green, *The Activities of Teaching* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971).

52. It is perhaps worth noting that Martin's discussion also fails to take into account the *moral* constraints on teaching suggested by the rationality theory, which takes as central the teacher's obligation to treat the student with respect as a person.

53. Martin, 'Excluding Women,' p. 147.

54. *Ibid.,* p. 145.

55. James McClellan, 'Response to Jane Martin,' pp. 21–6.

56. *Ibid.,* p. 22.

57. *Ibid.*

58. Martin, 'Needed: A New Paradigm for Liberal Education,' p. 271.

59. Martin, 'Excluding Women,' p. 147.

60. Martin, 'The Ideal of the Educated Person,' p. 319.

61. R.S. Peters, 'Reason and Habit: The Paradox of Moral Education,' in *Philosophy and Education,* 2nd edn, Israel Scheffler (ed.) (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1966), pp. 245–62, reprinted in Volume IV of this set, Paper 2.

62. R.S. Peters, 'Moral Development: A Plea for Pluralism,' in *Cognitive Development and Epistemology,* Theodore Mischel (ed.) (New York: Academic Press, 1971), pp. 237–67. Citation from p. 261, emphasis added.

63. *Ibid.,* p. 262.

64. R.S. Peters, 'Why Doesn't Lawrence Kohlberg Do His Homework?' in *Moral Education . . . It Comes with the Territory,* David Purpel and Devin Ryan (eds) (Berkeley, Calif.: McCutchan Publishing Co., 1976), pp. 288–90. Citation is from p. 289.

65. *Ibid.,* p. 289–90.

66. R.S. Peters, *Reason and Compassion* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972).

67. *Ibid.,* pp. 73.

68. *Ibid.,* p. 77. Cf. also p. 53, and throughout.

69. It must be pointed out that Martin cannot save her position by claiming that she is not interested in Peters's conception of the educated person, for on that conception a person's education includes at least moral education.

70. Though I am not convinced that Hirst is guilty of the fallacy, since I am dubious about Martin's argument that 'liberal education' means 'all that is valuable in education' and also since Hirst implicitly appeals to the normative premise that liberally educated persons ought to be familiar with the central forms of knowledge.

71. Martin, 'Excluding Women,' pp. 147–8.

72. *Ibid.,* p. 139.

73. *Ibid.,* p. 142. It is worth pointing out Martin's frequent sliding (as evidenced here) between leveling her charges at CAPE and at philosophy of education generally.

74. *Cf.* in this regard my 'The Future and Purpose of Philosophy of Education,' *Educational Theory* 31 (Winter 1981): 11–15.

15

EDUCATION, LIBERALISM AND HUMAN GOOD

John and Patricia White

I

Fundamental to liberalism, according to Ronald Dworkin, is the principle that 'the government must be neutral on what might be called the question of the good life'.[1] People differ, he goes on, about what gives value to life: the scholar has one conception, the 'television-watching, beer-drinking citizen' has another. In distributing resources, the government must not favour one group's preferences over another's: opera must not be subsidised if dog-racing is not.

What counts as 'the good life' on such a view seems to be something like: the life which most satisfies one's preferences, whatever these preferences may be. Rawls, in his *A Theory of Justice,* holds a similar view. But only given certain conditions. Among the most important of these are (1) that the 'preferences' here are the hierarchically ordered ends in an individual's life-plan, chosen after a process of deliberation in the light of a full knowledge of different options and consequences of adopting them; and (2) that 'something is good only if it fits into ways of life consistent with the principles of right already on hand'.[2] The 'good life' cannot include the life of a Nero or a Thrasymachus, however much their post-deliberative desires are satisfied: fulfilment of basic moral obligations is taken as read.

If Rawls's restrictions apply to Dworkin's theory, then they will both agree that Dworkin's beer-drinking TV addict or Rawls's man who has a passion for counting blades of grass in city squares may each be living the good life, provided that they have chosen these as their most important ends after mature reflection and provided that they are morally decent people.

Many will find this view unacceptable. The content of the good life, they will say, must surely be more delimited than this. It must include, perhaps, propensities of a more intellectual or artistic or altruistic kind: Truth, Beauty and Goodness, not mere preference-satisfaction.

The difficulty with such a counter-claim is that what seems to the objectors a universally

applicable content of the good life may turn out to be only their own subjective preference: although *they* prefer art to beer, have they any good reasons for insisting on it for all? It is this apparent absence of such reasons that makes neutrality so central a feature of liberalism as just described: no particular conception of the good life can be allowed to dominate over any other.

Liberalism brings with it a two-fold prescription for education. Each person must be brought up with all the intellectual equipment necessary to form a life-plan: a broad understanding of various possible activities and ways of life, of the means of achieving them and obstacles in the way; and a moral education which limits choice of a life-plan to one compatible with acting as a morally responsible being. (See White and Ackerman, for accounts of education which stress especially the first of these two prescriptions.[3])

II

There are a number of difficulties with this liberal conception of education.

First, how are pupils to relate to each other the two aims of their education? The first prescription, to do with the formulation of a life-plan, is about their own good; the second, to do with their moral responsibilities, brings in others' good also. What proportion of their time can be devoted to the one or to the other? How far, on the one hand, do their moral obligations extend; and which of their own ends, on the other, are permitted or excluded by the moral framework? On the former point, for instance, what place in their moral scheme has the obligation of beneficence? This can, notoriously, extend so far as to leave very little room in one's life for anything besides service to others; it can also be minimalised, thus leaving more space for other things. How do liberal individualists know where to draw the line? On the latter point, the reverse of the same coin, how do they know, for instance, whether aiming at a competitive good like a high salary or a position of power within an institution is morally permissible? And if their main pleasure in life is consumption, whether of consumer durables, food and drink, or entertainment, how do they know how much consumption, measured in time or in money, they are morally allowed?

As well as this kind of radical uncertainty, they may also experience doubts about why they should be altruistic in the first place. They can understand and appreciate *society's* reasons for having given them a moral education: if people were not brought up to keep their promises, refrain from injuring others, be fair, tell the truth, help others in distress and so on, then the conditions for a minimally civilised life would no longer obtain. But what are good reasons for society are not necessarily good reasons for themselves. As long as the great majority of people keep to the moral tracks, civilised life can carry on: a few free-riders here or there will not undermine it, so why should they not be among these few? And if no good reason is forthcoming, then perhaps they should not stick within the moral framework but rather formulate a life-plan which aims at their own well-being with no moral constraints on what its content might be.

They also face a third difficulty. How do they know what their well-being is? As liberal individualists they take it to consist in the maximisation of post-reflective desire-satisfaction. But why this? It seems to be an assumption, for which no further backing is provided. But if they are not to take it for granted, what is there to put in its place?

There is yet another problem with the liberal account of education. Ideally, it would seem, pupils are not to commit themselves to a way of life until they have become fully acquainted with as many options as possible and reflected on which to pursue. The good life is a product of reflective choice. But how is the reflection to be carried out? On what do they reflect? What guides their choice? Only, it would seem, the intensity of their present preferences for this or that, in relation to the overall goal of the maximisation of satisfaction: no other criterion is plausible. But then their choice of a way of life, which looked to be an act of willing, of self-creation, now seems to have turned into something like self-discovery: they see what their hierarchy of preferences is and adopt a life-plan in the light of that.[4]

Finally, there is the intuitive unacceptability of pupils' postponing commitment until beyond this stage of deliberation. Before this are they not to be encouraged to follow up their enthusiasms? If a child shows signs of devotion to the cello – more than is needed, that is, to understand what such an activity involves – is she to be directed to other pursuits so that she has a broader knowledge before she works out her life-plan? Many, perhaps most, teachers and parents will tell you this is madness.

III

Can it be that liberalism gives us a false picture of the good life and a false picture of education?

Alasdair MacIntyre, in *After Virtue,* argues for a more restricted view of the good life.[5] His book is an attempt to reconstruct an Aristotelian account of it. Aristotle held this to be a rationally ordered life in accordance with the virtues. On this account being courageous, temperate, just, magnanimous, etc. are implicit in one's structure of ends. On a theory, like liberalism, which separates the moral framework from the area of individual choice within it, being just or benevolent or honest is, perhaps, a *precondition* of one's attaining one's own well-being, but it is not necessarily a *constituent part* of that well-being. Similarly possessing not-necessarily-altruistic virtues like courage and temperance may be a *means* to one's well-being, but once again is not necessarily a part of this end itself. On a liberal view, it *may* always be part of an individual's project to be a certain sort of person, a person possessing these or those virtues, whether moral or self-regarding; but there is no *requirement* on one to choose this sort of end: beer-swilling, TV watching could still take the palm.

MacIntyre sees the Aristotelian view of the good life as having largely crumbled away through recent centuries and being in ruins today. A central argument goes as follows. For Aristotle, possessing the virtues is justifiable by reference to the good of the individual. He

works with a three-tier scheme of (1) untutored human nature, (2) possessing the virtues, (3) human nature as it is according to its *telos.* To realise one's good one must pass from (1) to (3); but it is only via (2) that one can do so. Within this Aristotelian scheme, the question that Plato poses at the beginning of the *Republic,* 'Why be just?' receives a clear answer: it is only through possessing justice, along with the other virtues, that one can achieve *eudaemonia.* During the Middle Ages, this Aristotelian scheme was preserved via its incorporation into Christian ethics. But now a new notion was added. Justice was still a part of blessedness; but it was now also enjoined on us by divine law. We have here the beginnings of a 'law conception' of morality, quite foreign to the Greeks, which became increasingly influential, not always in its religious version, up to the end of the eighteenth century, culminating in Kant's categorical imperative. By this time virtue concepts had ceded much of their central place in ethical discussion to the concept of the moral ought. At the same time the third tier of the Aristotelian scheme had largely dropped away with the decline of a belief in a teleological theory of human nature. The first tier, untutored human nature, was still present in the new ethics, alongside a revised second tier of moral injunctions about what one ought to do and not do.

A gap thus arose between morality and human nature. Moral ought judgments were no longer justifiable by reference to the nature-given purposes of the individual. This is–ought gap existed, as Hume saw, between the first two tiers, but it was no longer able to be filled by another, teleological, 'is' at the third tier. The question 'How are moral judgments to be justified?' thus became of central importance to ethics. MacIntyre sees the history of ethics since the eighteenth century largely as a series of attempts to provide a rational justification for moral ought judgments, accompanied by an equally powerful succession of sceptical ethical theories which question the possiblity of such a rationale. On the one side Kant, the utilitarians, the intuitionists and contemporary advocates of a rational morality; on the other, Hume, Nietzsche, the emotivists and present day anti-rationalists.

For MacIntyre this constant pendulum swing between the two positions is only to be expected given the rejection of something like an Aristotelian solution. More than this: since all attempts at rational solutions seem doomed to failure, moral scepticism would appear the only alternative. Sociologically, he claims, this is precisely what more and more people have by now come to think. Most people still adhere to moral codes or principles: they value honesty, fairness, kindness, loyalty and so on. But there is no good reason, it would seem, why they should do so. It is, no doubt, in the interest of those who govern and manage them that they follow these rules and cause no trouble. But from their own point of view what is there in it for them? They would do better to see the institution of morality for what it is, an ideological structure subserving the interests of those in power. Their one hope is to break free of it, transcend good and evil and pursue their own well-being as fully and freely as they can. Increasingly, this is precisely what more and more of us are coming to see. Although it is often prudent to pay lip-service to moral demands, there is no further rational constraint on one in that regard than that. For many the good life is the 'successful' life as conventionally understood, the life where one is wealthy enough

to pursue whatever pleasures one wishes to pursue, and powerful enough no longer to be pushed around.

MacIntyre holds that the only way of resisting these Nietzschean tendencies is by reconstructing something like the Aristotelian view of the good life.[6] Only 'something like', for little can be retained of Aristotle's teleological metaphysics. Positively, MacIntyre sees human well-being partly as embracing the pursuit of what he calls 'practices'.

> By a 'practice' I am going to mean any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realised in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended. Tic-tac-toe is not an example of a practice in this sense, nor is throwing a football with skill; but the game of football is, and so is chess. Brick-laying is not a practice; architecture is. Planting turnips is not a practice; farming is. So are the enquiries of physics, chemistry and biology, and so is the work of the historian, and so are painting and music. In the ancient and medieval worlds the creation and sustaining of human communities – of households, cities, nations – is generally taken to be a practice in the sense in which I have defined it.[7]

Practices, therefore, contain internal, shared, goods. These include not only the excellence of what is produced – paintings, cities, farms or whatever – but also the virtues necessary to sustain a practice – the courage and honesty, for instance, found in the willingness of a novice to subordinate herself to the best standards available within the practice, or the cooperativeness necessary for working on a common task.

Money, power, fame are not internal but 'external' goods. Unlike the former, they are not shared but belong exclusively to particular individuals; also unlike the former, the more some individuals possess them, the less there is for other people: external goods are essentially competitive. MacIntyre does not deny that external goods could have *some* place in the good life; but they must be subordinate in importance to internal goods.

MacIntyre's good life does not consist solely in engagement in practices. For one thing, what is required in one practice may be at odds with what is required in another: the demands on one as an artist, for instance, may get in the way of one's duties as a parent. Somehow the different practices in which one engages must be held harmoniously together within one's life as a whole. There must be some rational, integrating structure into which they all fit. The good life is to be understood, as once again with Aristotle, as the goodness of a life seen as a whole. For MacIntyre one's life has the structure of a narrative. It is a

gradually unfolding story whose future development is unknown and uncertain. The good life has the nature of a quest: 'the good life for man is the life spent in seeking for the good life for man'.[8] To sustain one in this quest one needs virtues over and above those found in particular practices. One needs a more general form of courage and temperance to enable one to withstand the dangers and temptations besetting one's life as a whole; one needs wisdom and judgment, integrity, constancy and patience.

A third, and final, stage in MacIntyre's account of the good life introduces the concept of tradition. In seeking the good and exercising the virtues one does not do so as a solitary individual but as a bearer of a particular social identity, as someone's daughter or father, as a member of such and such a work-group, as a citizen of such and such a city or nation. It is as a role-holder that I engage in practices; and what helps to hold my life together in a unity is my progression into and out of a succession of such roles. These roles and practices, institutions and communities in which they appear have a historical dimension: behind them lie traditions of thought and action which must be sustained and cherished – not in a hidebound way, to be sure – if they are to flourish. Since it is lack of justice, lack of truthfulness, lack of courage and lack of the relevant intellectual virtues which corrupt traditions and the practices, institutions and communities which currently embody them, we see, finally, a third way in which the virtues enter into the good life – not only as a feature of practices and of the unity of individual lives, but also as that which sustains the tradition within which alone these things can exist.

There is much more to MacIntyre's whole argument than this; but enough of it has been presented, we hope, for the nature of his challenge to liberal individualism to be reasonably clear. The good life no longer centres around the maximal satisfaction of any preferred desires compatible with a basic morality. On this liberal view there is nothing to stop external goods – fame, power, money, pleasure – from being those most ardently sought. The problem in liberalism of relating the moral framework to the pursuit of personal goals within it, to do not least with the danger of an erosion or collapse of the moral framework in the absence of any personally acceptable rationale for it, evaporates in MacIntyre's theory: since one's dominant ends must be the internal goods required by practices, the unified life, and the social roles and traditions within which they find a place, these include among other things the possession of the virtues, including the more altruistic or 'moral virtues', needed to sustain these practices and this kind of life. Being morally good, in short, is a necessary and not merely an optional part of one's own well-being.

IV

If MacIntyre is broadly right about the good life – and we shall be examining more closely whether he is in the next section – education will have to be conceived of otherwise than in liberal theory. The liberal division between (1) equipping pupils to choose a life-plan and (2) moral education will be replaced by something more unitary. Children will be

brought up in a framework in which internal goods predominate over external and in which, in particular, they will come not only to possess altruistic as well as other virtues, but also to see it as part of their own good to be persons possessing virtues of this sort.

True, children will still have to learn to conform to the basic moral rules which MacIntyre sees as necessary for a community to flourish – rules, for example, against personal injury, murder, lying, stealing, breaking promises. This basic moral education is also a feature of liberalism. If MacIntyre's theory is correct, however, the free-rider problem which bedevilled liberalism will evaporate as children come to see such conformity as necessary to their own well-being as well as to that of others, since the two are now inextricably connected.

But within this framework of basic rules, the good life for the individual will consist predominantly of shared goods. Presumably in some way education will reflect MacIntyre's part–whole distinction between engagement in practices and living one's life as a whole. How exactly it will do this is not clear: MacIntyre's theory is about the good life itself rather than education for the good life, and there are many different ways in which one could envisage the latter taking place.

In what follows there will be no attempt at a comprehensive account of an education along MacIntyrean lines. Nothing will be said, for instance, about possible relations between education and the economy. We will restrict ourselves to some observations, partly inspired by difficulties in liberalism, first (A) about practices and then (B) about the unity of an individual life. Points connected with the third element in MacIntyre's account of the good – to do with traditions and social roles – will be incorporated in what follows, rather than being allotted a separate section.

A

Many educational questions could be raised about MacIntyre's practices. We shall restrict ourselves to two, both of which relate back to problems in liberalism: (1) are pupils to be introduced to a full range, or a limited range, of practices? and (2) what is it, anyhow, for a pupil to be 'introduced' to a practice?

As regards (1), an argument familiar from liberal educational theory seems equally apposite here. There is no general reason why a pupil's educators should seek to limit the range of options available. If their own view of the good life embraces only some of the permissible ends and excludes others, why should their view take precedence over others which are more catholic? While this line of thought seems cogent against ideological educators of this sort, it seems to fall short of implying that all educators have a duty to extend the range of options as far as possible. Suppose we take Ieuan Lloyd's imaginary case of the boy brought up in a fishing community who has decided from an early age that he wants to become a boat builder like his ancestors and consequently finds most of what goes on during his schooldays irrelevant and uninteresting.[9] Have his educators – his parents and teachers – a duty to try to widen his horizons? If they let him follow his bent, they are not

imposing on him their own ideology of the good life but letting him discover his own version of it. He will become involved in a practice, acquiring en route its specific virtues. No doubt he will enter into other practices found within the fishing community in which he lives: he will become, perhaps, a husband or father, a darts player, an informal teacher of apprentice boat builders, etc. He will be able to lead a satisfying, virtuous life within his own community. What good is it to him to know about physics or painting or skiing or antique collecting?

It certainly seems more tempting to resist the extension of horizons here than when working within liberal assumptions. For central to liberalism is the notion of choice between different possible satisfactions: if the boy is to be restricted to a boat builder's life, how does one know that he would not have preferred, if given the chance, the life of, say, a journalist or engineer? Only he can decide what is best for him, and for this he needs to know what the major alternatives are. Looking at the matter from MacIntyre's Aristotelian perspective, things are less clear-cut. It looks as if the boy could lead a life that satisfies most of his criteria of the good life for man. Engagement in practices, possession of the virtues, the weaving together of a complete life are what count, not the maximisation of preference-satisfactions.

Yet one is still inclined to say that something is missing from the boy's life. Not all of MacIntyre's criteria have been satisfied. He sees the good life, we may remember, as a kind of *quest*: 'the good life for man is spent in seeking for the good life for man'. The boy could become so entrapped within the conventions of his various social roles that he may be incapable of seeing life in this way. Necessary to the good life is a form of freedom, not the kind of freedom that liberalism stresses – the freedom of choice between different satisfactions – but the freedom to reflect on the general framework within which one is living one's life and to modify that framework where it seems to one inadequate.

This line of thought seems to suggest that what the boy could have benefited by in the education that he has missed is not so much an introduction to the other practices as an engagement with studies of a more holistic kind – literature, perhaps, or history, for instance – which would help to free him in the way just described. But this, while true, is not enough. For he will not be able to attain liberating perspectives on his own life and situation until he knows something about other practices found in the wider community of which his fishing community is a part. Fishing is not an activity that takes place in isolation from everything else. It is one form of primary food production of which farming is another form; it helps to determine whether a country is to be self-sufficient in food or will need to export manufactures against food imports; and so on. A broad acquaintance with other practices is therefore desirable in order to put those in which one does engage in proper perspective.

How far does one also require this broad acquaintance, as liberalism would maintain, in order to decide which practices to adopt in the first place? Insofar as it *is* a matter of *deciding* which to adopt, some knowledge of alternatives is presupposed; but a basic point at issue between liberalism and its Aristotelian critics is just whether, or to what extent,

one *finds oneself* involved in practices without having chosen them. When one is born into a family one begins to participate in sustaining and enriching this human community. In less socially mobile societies one grows up in similar fashion as a participator in all sorts of practices. In our kind of society, some roles, like that of family member, are still ascribed, but many others depend on the individual's choices. One relevant factor here is that children by and large are usually *not* in the position of the boy in the story: they are typically not wholly and unshakably committed to one way of life or major activity. If they *are* to become committed to something, they must either be steered towards something determinate – and this, we have seen, seems unjustifiable – or they must be presented with various alternatives in the hope that some more than others attract them. But to accept this is not to go all the way with liberalism. The liberal would still want to keep all options open for those children in the position of the young boat-builder. But why? If a child brought up in a highly musical family knows at eleven that she wants to devote herself to the cello, for which she has a considerable talent, is there any point in introducing her to all sorts of other activites so that she can make her considered choice later? The basis of the liberal position must be that the child may be wrong. But wrong about what? Presumably about the belief that she will get more satisfaction out of playing the cello than out of other things. But this assumes that one's good consists in maximising satisfactions; and this assumption should not be taken as read.

In an education on MacIntyrean lines then, the practices to which children are drawn will be set within the context of other related practices as well as studies of a holistic kind to serve the ultimate end of enabling them to pursue the quest of the good life. There will be no pressure to add to the range of practices to which they are introduced purely in the interests of extending choice to maximise desire satisfaction. Breadth there will be, not for this reason, but so that children are acquainted with all sorts of things to which they may become attracted.

So much, then, for question (1), about whether children are to be introduced to a wider, rather than narrower, range of practices. Question (2) was: what is it for a pupil to be 'introduced' to a practice? According to liberalism, being introduced to an activity for which one might opt must be primarily a matter of coming to be acquainted with it, that is, coming to understand enough about it to be in a reliable position to judge whether or not one wants to incorporate it into one's life-plan. It is not at all clear that one even needs to have engaged in the activity in order to possess this understanding.[10] And even where one does engage in it, it is as well, on the liberal view, that one does not become too enthusiastically committed to it, as this might blind one to the delights of other things.

If we follow MacIntyre, however, being introduced to practices cannot be like this. For one of the central goods intrinsic to a practice is possessing the virtues which engagement in it brings with it. It is not enough to 'know about', say, playing football in an external way if one is to acquire the courage, cooperativeness, etc. which playing this game promotes. One has to play it – and not just once or twice or for a few weeks, but for as long as it takes for one to build up something of the relevant virtues. And the idea, finally, that one should

ideally temper one's enthusiasm for the game so as not to bias one's judgments about a life-plan now comes to seem nonsensical: if one is really to acquire the virtues and not some strange, dispensable, simulacrum of them, one needs surely to enter wholeheartedly into the activity in question.

Does this mean that one would never give it up? We think not. As one gets on the inside of more and more practices, and one is drawn to more and more things, one realises that one cannot do everything and must establish hierarchies of value. Activites which most attract one will rise to the top of this hierarchy; others will drop. Sometimes there will not even be room at the top for all the things one most wants to do and difficult decisions may have to be made – only, however, because they are forced on one, not, as in liberalism, in order to maximise one's satisfactions.

Being 'introduced' to practices thus requires engagement in them in order to possess the goods, including the virtues, which they embody. Liberalism is constantly tempted to retreat from engagement, since this may bias one's life choices in favour of those activites which one has already undertaken; it takes refuge in a mere 'acquaintance'. But the MacIntyrean point of view need not rule out the latter altogether. One may be drawn to practices which one has not experienced as a participant, but into which related practices, together with observation or imagination, have given one an entrée – windsurfing, for instance, to someone thoroughly at home in other water sports. Part of the 'breadth' mentioned at the end of the last sub-section may be achieved in this non-participant way. But it is only in one sense 'non-participant': one may not have actually wind-surfed, but one appreciates its excellences *from within,* i.e. from having engaged in cognate activites; and one *already* possesses the virtues it demands, from the same source. So 'external acquaintance' is nine-tenths 'internal experience'. This is no problem for a MacIntyrean, even though it is for the liberal, whose retreat from commitment to acquaintance now becomes incoherent.

B

The kind of education we are considering will not only introduce pupils to a range of practices but also help them to make sense of their life as a whole. It is impossible, as the above discussion has shown, to keep these two sides of education wholly apart: children are not initiated into practices atomistically, but in such a way as to incorporate them into a developing plan or picture of their life as a whole. At some points in their education holistic considerations will predominate over particularities; at other points vice versa. Sometimes they will be summoned within, to attend to the inmost demands of their being, at other times they will forget themselves, lose themselves, in particular practices. Part of the educator's task on the holistic side will be to foster those virtues – integrity, constancy, judgment, courage, etc. – which relate especially to one's life taken as a whole. *How* this is to be done is another matter. Public discussion, private reflection, imaginative

involvement via literature or biography in the lives of others – all these, we suggest, may be of service. But this is not, patently, an area where quick results may be expected. Just as the virtues associated with particular practices are only to be acquired through immersion in the practices, so the holistic virtues are the product of long engagement in living itself.

There is more one could say about this second aspect of education. About the special importance of history, for instance. History can be seen from one standpoint as a practice in its own right, with its own standards and forms of excellence and its own characteristic virtues. But it also has a more pivotal position. Like a life itself, it too has a narrative structure. Coming to see human life in general as a series of interconnecting stories helps one to seen one's own life as one such story, in which parts of other people's stories are constantly embedded and which in its turn is similarly embedded in the lives of others. History, too, by revealing the traditions within which particular practices and forms of communal life are set, helps the pupil to see her life not as an isolated strand, criss-crossing at points with the strands of others' lives, but as part of more closely woven patterns whose origins lie often far back in the past.

With these few remarks, which we realise could be filled out further in all sorts of ways, we must leave this more holistic dimension of a MacIntyrean education and with it our larger sketch of the way in which considerations deriving from MacIntyre's theory might help us to formulate educational aims. No doubt many readers will feel, as we do, that there is something immensely attractive about such an upbringing. It incorporates so many of the more appealing features of different schools of thought while avoiding the difficulties which generally accompany them. It stresses breadth of experience, yet without sacrificing commitment; it is thoroughly pupil-centred, but sees the pupil always as a member of a community; it is not excessively biased towards the intellectual and academic, but by no means excluding them; it stresses both the 'whole person' and engagement in particular activities; it gives the virtues a prominence to which many would wish to restore them; it sees the vital importance of traditions, but does not imprison pupils within them; and so on.

V

If MacIntyre's basic arguments are sound, they provide us with the tools for beginning to construct a theory – or theories – of education which many would find attractive. The question now is: *are* they sound?

Can one show that the good for man consists in being the kind of person MacIntyre delineates rather than in the satisfaction of preferred desires championed by liberalism? A liberal sceptic might argue that he cannot see why shared ends must predominate in a person's value-system, while external ends like power or fame must be of secondary

importance. No doubt many people will be drawn towards communal forms of life embodied in practices and lives woven round them, but how can it be claimed that this is the good life for all and not only for those who so choose? How far has MacIntyre made the very familiar mistake of objectifying his own personal vision of how life should be led and erecting it into a goal for everybody?

If he *has* done so, the educational proposals of the last section now take on a different look. If MacIntyre's theory were true, there would be everything to be said for initiating children into practices and getting them to see that their own good is inextricable from the good of others. But if all we have is MacIntyre's personal preferences in seeking to base educational recommendations on them, we are in danger of imposing these preferences on all those pupils brought up under this *aegis.* Far from achieving their own good, they may become indoctrinated in somebody else's unfounded vision of it. How could a supporter of MacIntyre's Aristotelianism defend it against such onslaughts from the liberal – or Nietzschean peering derisively over his shoulder?

Sandel claims, like MacIntyre, that any individual's good must be a shared or communal good:

> what at first appears as 'my' assets are more properly described as common assets in some sense; since others made me, and in various ways continue to make me, the person I am, it seems appropriate to regard them, in so far as I can identify them, as participants in 'my' achievements and common beneficiaries of the rewards they bring. Where this sense of participation in the achievements and endeavours of (certain) others engages the reflective self-understandings of the participants, we may come to regard ourselves, over the range of our various activities, less as individuated subjects with certain things in common, and more as members of a wider (but still determinate) subjectivity, less as 'others' and more as participants in a common identify, be it family or community or class or people or nation.[11]

Our sceptic will not find this a sound line of argument. He may well accept that no one is the atomic individual of, say, Hobbesian theory. It is indeed true that others have made me in some sense the person that I am: all my activities depend on my ability to use concepts; and I should not have become a conceptuser if other people, already adept at employing concepts, had not initiated me into their correct use. It is necessarily true both that I had intimate personal relationships with those who thus formed me and that the latter belonged to larger communities sharing common forms of life, into which I was also inducted as a member. All this can be granted. But it does not follow that having been formed in this way, I must now value above all else those things that draw me towards

these social attachments rather than distance me from them. A Nietzschean can readily admit that he is a social creature in that he could not have grown up in social isolation; but, once grown up, what is there to stop him looking down on his parents, his neighbours and his fellow citizens as sheep, as timid conformists, unable, like himself, to live for his own self-fulfilment?

What stops him, Sandel may reply, is not only that others have 'made' him, but also that they 'in many ways continue to make' him the person that he is. If it is the case that throughout one's life one's identity is continually being formed and reformed by one's social relationships in such a way that it is inextricable from the identities of others, then the delimited self and the delimited personal well-being that goes with it on which liberal or Nietzschean theory depends is conceptually impossible.

But need these formative relationships continue into the future, however essential to my identity they have been in the past? Am I not now in a position to continue the task of creating myself *myself,* without further help from those around me? Can I not now become the artist of my own life working on the blocked-in canvas that others have bequeathed me and shaping it into a form of art? True, to do so would mean loosening the connexions that have bound me to others, since their continuing power to shape my identity would get in the way of my own determination to complete the job myself. But a Nietzschean hero would not baulk at that.

Sandel says that 'to imagine a person incapable of constitutive attachments such as those is not to conceive an ideally free and rational agent, but to imagine a person wholly without character, without moral depth.'[12] 'But morality is for the herd,' the Nietzschean will reply, 'I have transcended all that. Why am I not then free?'

It seems clear to us that Sandel's line of argument is not proof against the determined sceptic. But it is high time, in any sense, to leave Sandel and turn to MacIntyre, for although both thinkers are arguing to similar conclusions, it is with the particularities of MacIntyre's position that we have been chiefly concerned and it is important to see with what basic arguments he underpins them.

For MacIntyre the battlelines are clearly drawn between Nietzsche and Aristotle. At the beginning of this essay we were not concerned with Nietzsche but with such liberal thinkers as Rawls and Dworkin. But Nietzscheanism, for MacIntyre, is 'only one more facet of that very (liberal individualism) of which Nietzsche took himself to be an implacable critic'.[13] It is liberal individualism which has finally transcended that moral framework within which the individual's good is to be sought, once that framework has been shown to be bereft of a rational basis. What reason does MacIntyre give us for going along with his Aristotelianism rather than with Nietzsche?

Part of the answer takes us in the same direction as Sandel. MacIntyre points out that Nietzsche's hero, in transcending his social attachments, deprives himself of the goods which these bring with them.

For if the conception of a good has to be expounded in terms of such

actions as those of a practice, of the narrative unity of a human life and of a moral tradition, then goods, and with them the only grounds for the authority of laws and virtues, can only be discovered by entering into those relationships which constitute communities whose central bond is a shared vision and understanding of goods. To cut oneself off from shared activity in which one has initially to learn obediently as an apprentice learns, to isolate oneself from the communities which find their point and purpose in such activities, will be to debar oneself from finding any good outside oneself. It will be to condemn oneself to that moral solipsism which constitutes Nietzschean greatness.[14]

The first point to note about this argument is its apparent uncertainty about whether the Nietzschean solipsist can be said to have a good. At one point it says that goods can only be discovered by entering into social relations; but later, in claiming that solipsists will be debarred from finding any good outside themselves, it seems to be implying that the only good they can find is within themselves. It seems clear from other parts of MacIntyre's general argument, mentioned earlier in this essay, that there is room in his theory for goods not dependent on practices and social attachments. He distinguishes earlier between 'internal' and 'external' goods. The latter are non-shared goods like fame and power. If the Nietzschean is debarred from internal goods he still has these. But these are precisely the kind of goods he prefers! To talk of his being 'debarred' from social goods and 'condemned' to moral solipsism seems to simply that he is somehow *harmed* by taking the stance he does, that he is somehow unfree or constrained. But this is a strange charge against the Nietzschean. For no one has *made* him become a solipsist. It was a free voluntary act on his part to transcend all social ties.

To turn to a more central point. MacIntyre's argument begins with a hypothetical: '*if* the conception of a good has to be expounded in terms of such actions as those of a practice (etc.)'. It rests therefore on an assumption. We may overlook here the question, just raised, as to whether the existence, on his own admission, of external goods destroys this conceptual claim and take it that what is at issue is whether the good life for any individual must consist *predominantly,* although not exclusively, of internal rather than external goods. MacIntyre's argument against the Nietzschean rests squarely on the assumption that this Aristotelian account of the good is rationally defensible: if it is, then clearly the Nietzschean is harmed by taking the solipsist path.

But what is there in MacIntyre to *show* that it is rationally defensible? It is just at this crux that he leaves us disappointingly in the lurch. He tells us that he cannot go so far as to give a *proof* of his conclusions.[15] This does not matter, he says, because arguments in philosophy rarely take the form of proofs. What is needed to help resolve the present issue, like so many other philosophical issues, appears to be that the contending parties should stand back from their dispute and ask what the appropriate rational procedures are

for settling it. MacIntyre states that his arguments 'do indeed *presuppose* a systematic, although here unstated, account of rationality'.[16] He promises us this account in a subsequent book.

MacIntyre seems to be taking it as read that the theory of rationality he has in mind will come down convincingly in favour of Aristotelianism. Without the argument before us, however, we do not know how far it will. The Nietzschean sceptic has not yet, it seems, been dislodged. 'If I represent just one more facet of liberal individualism,' we may picture him crowing:

> What is MacIntyre's but the latest attempt of objectivist philosophy to shore up the indefensible institution of morality? He presents his rehash of Aristotle as the only escape from the futile pendulum-swing between objectivists and their critics that has gone on since the eighteenth century, but, to turn his critique of Nietzscheanism on its head, his own stance 'turns out not to be a mode of escape from or an alternative to (this historical movement), but rather one more representative moment in its internal unfolding'.[17]

VI

How far does the difficulty of clinching MacIntyre's argument against the Nietzschean mean that the educational recommendations sketched in Section IV, which were based on his theory and which seemed so attractive, have no firm foundation?

MacIntyre faces two challenges. The first is from the liberal individualist, who acknowledges moral obligations of some sort but argues that, provided he fulfils them, he sees no reason why he should weight his preferences on the side of shared goods. The second and more radical comes from the Nietzschean, who claims he has been given no good reason why he should even accept morality.

Let us begin with the second. MacIntyre's ethics is not wholly an ethics of the virtues. He also holds, as we have seen, that there are certain 'absolute prohibitions' against such things as the taking of innocent life, theft, etc., without which a community in which the virtues are to flourish cannot exist.[18] Faced with a Nietzschean, who sees reasons in general why society needs such rules but no reason why *he* should follow them, he would argue presumably that since the Nietzschean's well-being is inseparable from that of others he cannot rationally want to kill them, deceive them, steal from them and so on. As we have seen, the Nietzschean can refuse to accept the conclusion by rejecting the premise.

If MacIntyre has a problem on his hands, it is not obvious that educators attracted by MacIntyre's ideas are in a similar plight. It is not at all difficult for them to show that children must be brought up within some kind of morality which includes MacIntyre's absolute prohibitions. They can rely on the argument, which both MacIntyre and the

Nietzschean would accept, that some sort of morality is a precondition of perhaps any, certainly any tolerable, sort of social life. For this reason they will want children not to be brought up outside the moral pale. (We shall take it that it would be otiose at this point to ask why the educators themselves could not be amoralists. It is hard to see how they could consistently with this be concerned with children's upbringing, which is normally taken to aim at promoting the well-being of the children themselves and of others in the community as well. Educators must be guided, it seems, by some kind of principle of beneficence: the alternative, that they see pupils and their upbringing only as means to their own egoistic ends, is something we can rule out by definition.)

MacIntyre belongs to that school of moral philosophers who believe that there must be some watertight argument to show that really to promote one's own well-being one must promote the well-being of others. For him the thoroughly rational amoralist would seem to be an absurdity. We are inclined, however, to believe, along with Bernard Williams, that the amoralist may always be able to stand his ground in argument, and that ultimately being moral is not basable on reasons which any rational person must accept but on possessing the desire to promote others' good as well as one's own.[19] It is one of the central tasks of early education to implant, or perhaps strengthen, that desire. Just as educators ignore the sceptic about the existence of physical objects and other minds in getting children to build up a picture of empirical reality, so they ignore the moral sceptic in steering them towards altruism. Where knock-down reasons give out, education guides and shapes. It does not have to indoctrinate: there is nothing in this story about preventing pupils, when they are capable of it, from reflecting on the bases either of their empirical knowledge or of morality.

The second challenge which MacIntyre faces is that of the liberal individualist. The general problem here is: granted that one accepts some sort of moral obligations, why should shared goods predominate among one's chosen ends? MacIntyre has so far failed, as we have seen, to answer this incontrovertibly. Does this mean that educators have no good reason to steer pupils towards a life in which shared goods predominate? Once again, we shall claim, where general arguments give out, educational arguments can take one further.

The life of liberal individualists is marked by the indeterminacy, arbitrariness and inconsistency of their position described in Section II: they have problems, most importantly in relating their moral framework to the pursuit of their own good; but also in justifying their view of what the latter consists in; and in squaring their belief in self-creation with features which make the good life seem more like self-discovery.

Such a life fails radically in coherence, in psychic integration. As should be evident from Section III, this difficulty can be removed, or at least reduced, if one shifts to something like a MacIntyrean form of life in which one's good consists predominantly in the shared ends of practices and social roles and in the narrative unity of one's life. Not that it *necessarily* consists in this, as it does in MacIntyre's theory: it results from a *decision* to give the individual's good this social and integrative character.

But suppose our liberal individualist does not want the difficulties removed? He may

agree that if he takes the MacIntyrean path he will achieve a higher degree of psychic integration than if he does not, but he may see no good reason for putting such weight on psychic integration: some people may value it highly, but he is willing to tolerate, perhaps even enjoy, a greater disharmony. Not, indeed, that everything is in chaos. He adheres to the moral framework, establishes a rational hierarchy of ends within it, and where there are indeterminacies, about the proper extent of beneficence, for instance, he introduces his own *ad hoc* criteria. True, there is some arbitrariness about this, just as there is if he adopts a maximising conception of his good. But – and this is his central claim – why should the desire to reduce arbitrariness further in the interests of an integrated value-system take precedence over other things?

We do not know whether the sceptic about psychic integration can be incontrovertibly answered any more than the moral sceptic can. But even if he cannot, it may still be reasonable for educators to induct pupils into a MacIntyrean form of life, just as we saw that they are justified in moulding them into moral beings and not amoralists.

First, what alternatives can one envisage if they are *not* to aim at psychic integration? These are: either to disregard integration or, positively, to aim at the fragmented self whose values, goals, aspirations are all at odds with each other. To *aim* at fragmentation is clearly unacceptable. At worst the loss of psychic unity could be so severe as to constitute a mental illness and in less extreme cases it would simply result in the frustration of worthwhile purposes as these criss-crossed each other. To *disregard* the need for integration could leave the individual open to the same dangers. Aiming at integrative unity, as a formal notion, is then a necessity.

An objector may say: 'I can see that educators must aim at *some degree* of psychic unity; but, as already conceded, the liberal individualist can be a fairly well-integrated person, so we are still lacking an argument for a specifically MacIntyrean set of educational ends.' The difficulty here is that it seems unreasonable for educators to aim at a lesser harmony when they could aim at a greater. The lesser harmony may suit those pupils who turn out to favour liberal individualism, but educators have no reason to think that all, or even most, will turn out like this. Not knowing how any pupil will turn out in the end, educators have no good reason for deliberately restricting the amount of integration at which they aim, and thus building sources of potential psychic disturbance into their pupils' souls from the start.

Psychic integration provides one reason, therefore, why educators should steer children towards a life in which shared goods predominate. Two further arguments also support this conclusion.

Firstly, there are some shared goods towards which educators cannot help steering children. We saw above in our discussion of Sandel in Section V that becoming a concept-user depends on coming to share common forms of life, within the family and outside it.

Secondly, to highlight shared goods fits the social framework within which all, or virtually all, one's pupils will find themselves living. All but determined loners will live their lives as holders of a variety of social roles. Their lives will largely consist of role-

occupancy of one sort or another. It is not as though they could divide their lives into two segments – a role-occupying part of secondary importance and a non-role-occupying part of supreme significance to them with regard to which role-holding was instrumental, hindering or irrelevant. *So much* of their lives is likely to enmesh them in social relationships – not necessarily face-to-face: the scholar, for instance, is related to dead scholars in the past as well as to those unborn – that educators would seem fully justified in steering their pupils toward a life of predominantly shared goods.

None of this excludes pupils' coming to prefer a life devoted to 'external' goods. But if they do so, they must count the cost. How likely are they to succeed in transcending their social ties? What alternative goods are left to them once social goods have been put to one side? Are the alternative goods so much more preferable as to justify the rigours of the path? Do the attachments which their educators have taught them to cherish count as nothing? Few people, we suggest, are likely to opt for this way of life against such a background. (The claim is empirical, but not of a sort that requires empirical *research* to render it plausible.)

This last point helps to meet the charge that steering one's pupils in a MacIntyrean direction is indoctrinating them in *one* vision of the good life, which not all will find compelling. There is certainly a danger of indoctrination here. But it can be avoided; indeed, if MacIntyre's line of thought is followed through in its entirety, it *must* be avoidable. We mentioned above that for MacIntyre the good life takes the form of a quest: one can never remain imprisoned within one's social roles, but must prize and use one's freedom to reflect on and modify the framework of value-assumptions within which one is living. This implies that pupils brought up to see their good as consisting predominantly in shared goods are not to accept this unreflectively. They will be encouraged to test the view against other alternatives. It is unlikely, as we suggest, that they will find the costs worth paying, but they are not debarred from such a step.

But is this not to weight things too much on MacIntyre's side? For once they have been brought up in the MacIntyrean way, they will be naturally more likely still to cling to this even when initiated into, say, Nietzscheanism. Would it not be fairer to allow both these – and other – alternatives an equal chance?

But this makes no sense. Children have to be brought up – from the cradle upwards – in *some* pattern of values: one cannot leave them directionless until they are mature and knowledgeable enough to make autonomous choices. We have already provided reasons why a broadly MacIntyrean direction is to be preferred.

The two arguments in this section have been directed at the general moral sceptic and at the sceptic about a life in which shared goods predominate. If they work (either of them), they touch on questions about the position of philosophy of education within philosophy as a whole. In many quarters it is looked down on very much as a poor relation, if not a pariah. But if the line of thought in this section is correct, its role may be much more important, since by adopting an educational perspective one can, it seems, circumvent important forms of ethical scepticism which general philosophical argument leaves intact.

If we add to this the way in which the same perspective has helped in understanding the bases of our knowledge of the empirical world,[20] we have grounds for claiming that philosophical reflection on education, far from being peripheral, becomes of central importance to both epistemology and ethics.

Notes

1. *Taking Rights Seriously,* Duckworth, 1977, p. 127.
2. *A Theory of Justice,* Oxford University Press, 1971, p. 396.
3. J.P. White, *Towards a Compulsory Curriculum,* Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973; B. Ackerman, *Social Justice in the Liberal State,* Yale University Press, 1980.
4. See M.J. Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice,* Cambridge University Press. 1982, pp. 161ff.
5. *After Virtue,* Duckworth, 1981.
6. 'Nietzschean' is used broadly here to cover ways of life, such as that just mentioned, which conspicuously lack Nietzschean grandeur.
7. MacIntyre, *op. cit.,* p. 175.
8. *Ibid.,* p. 204.
9. 'The Rational Curriculum: a Critique', *Journal of Curriculum Studies,* Vol. 12, No. 4, 1980.
10. See J.P. White, *op. cit.,* ch. 3.
11. Sandel, *op. cit.,* p. 143.
12. *Ibid.,* p. 179.
13. MacIntyre, *op. cit.,* p. 241.
14. *Ibid.,* p. 240.
15. *Ibid.,* p. 241.
16. *Ibid.,* p. 242.
17. *Ibid.,* p. 241.
18. *Ibid.,* p. 347.
19. 'Egoism and Altruism', in *Problems of the Self,* Cambridge University Press, 1973.
20. See L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations,* Blackwell, 1953; and D.W. Hamlyn, *Experience and the Growth of Understanding,* Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978.

EDUCATION IN A DESTITUTE TIME

A Heideggerian approach to the problem of education in the age of modern technology

Michael Bonnett

I should like, in this paper, to try to sketch a view that Martin Heidegger has developed concerning modern technology and to begin to indicate some questions that it poses for the educator.

The title takes its rise from Heidegger's reflections on a question that Holderlin poses in one of his poems: '. . . and what are poets for in a destitute time?'[2] Heidegger suggests that the 'time' referred to is our own and that it can be significantly characterised as the age that lives in the wake of the death of God, and whose only remaining justification is its great poetry, for this is its last, and now very tenuous, link with the divine. Ours is the age in which man is caught up in a going beyond and against his own essense and is so enthralled in this movement that he does not recognise it for what it is: the coming completion of nihilism. It is the age of which Heidegger feels entitled to say: 'We are too late for the Gods and too early for Being.'

Let us start again.

Feelings of alienation and depersonalisation in modern technological society and worries about its destructive power in the form of nuclear bombs, pollution, etc. have brought many to acknowledge that technology is not an unadulterated good. For some, the sheer power that it seems to promise man and the accompanying break-up of traditional values, received wisdom, etc. has stirred further unease. It is, therefore, frequently admitted that how to deal with the growth in dominance of technology is a pressing problem. Indeed it does not seem totally implausible to think that it might turn out to be *the* problem of our time, one to which modern man must find an adequate response if he is to survive. As such it would seem to be a problem that should concern educationalists, for the understanding and attitudes that the young acquire with respect to technology would in this case be crucial to the prospects of humanity, and an

education that remained abstracted from this historical situation would be seriously lacking.

A typical response to the problem, if we allow it to remain one, has been to say, in effect, that man must reassert himself as master of technology: technology is a matter of means to ends and man must bring it back into harness so that it will serve *his* ends, i.e. the solution is more careful control. But for Heidegger this response is quite inadequate, resting, as it seems to him, on a superficial understanding of the sort of thing that technology is. Far from merely being a means, technology is in its essence a particular relationship between man and Being which both conditions man and the way in which Being is revealed to him. It is then, to use Heidegger's own terminology, a 'mode of revealing'.[3]

Let us pause for a moment to note the importance of this claim. It is of course true that others beside Heidegger have tried to point out that technology in some of its facets and through some of its products affects man's outlook in ways which are deeper and more pervasive than a simple means–end model would suggest. Marshall McLuhan's discussion of media is one of many such cases in point. However, apart from anticipating such subsequent discussions, Heidegger's claim that technology is a mode of revealing goes considerably deeper than any of them. It attempts to underline the *essential* nature of what is coming about with the well-publicised growth of technology. For Heidegger, what is at stake is man himself – not now merely in the sense of his physical survival to which the concerns about environmental pollution, etc. call attention, or just in terms of the effects that the products of technology have on his thinking, but in terms of his *essence,* which for Heidegger means: that which is holding sway through him. For man *is* essentially in the way he relates to the world – he is, as man, only insofar as he reveals it and in what manner. Thus whatever can be said concerning this revealing characterises man at any historical point in the most fundamental way that is possible. It characterises him in his way of being, i.e. *metaphysically.* By this token it also presents a challenge to educational thought, for there can be no view of education that is not informed by a view of man. And from the Heideggerian standpoint a number of contemporary views of education are informed by a distorted view of man.

Let us explore a little further, then, this notion of technology as a mode of revealing and what Heidegger sees to essentially characterise it. One of its central features, for Heidegger, is its inherent aggressiveness, of which there are two related aspects. The technological mode of revealing is aggressive in the sense that it involves us in the world in a way such that we increasingly come to perceive the world and ourselves exclusively from its standpoint, covering over and subverting other ways of understanding and perceiving. While this will require substantiation, the claim is that technological revealing is rapidly becoming *the* standard for reality; that which does not appear for this revealing is increasingly becoming accounted as merely nothing. Secondly, and more fundamentally, it is aggressive in the sense that in its attempts to understand things it subordinates them to an external ordering such that things

themselves are 'annihilated' through being disclosed only insofar as they can thus be 'ordered up'. Technological revealing seeks to see everything as means and this itself becomes the overriding end of thought. Such instrumentality means that nature is constantly to be reckoned up, and thus constantly challenged to put in an appearance within the defining categories that make such calculation possible, and which themselves are motivated by a demand that nature provides us with resources for whatever projects we may have. Nature is, as it were, 'checked off' as present or absent in the required pre-specified respects and thus 'identified' and 'accounted for', stabilised and made ready for use. To this end nature becomes increasingly set up as a pure resource, it becomes converted into a 'standing reserve'. A tract of land is seen as a mineral deposit, a river as a source of hydro-electricity, people as manpower for industry whose production is for consumption, the landscape as on call for inspection by a tour group ordered there by the vacation industry. Increasingly, nothing is any longer allowed to stand there in its own right, openness, but has its standing only in terms of the way it is ordered according to technological 'enframing'.[4] Nature herself is only remembered insofar as she presents problems in being converted into a pure resource, her intractibility being viewed as something to be manipulated and overcome – an impurity which stands in the way of the demand for a pure reserve that can be stored and endlessly switched about according to our varying demands. Thus the uniqueness and richness of the singular thing is increasingly levelled off and forgotten in order that it can be the better ordered, subsumed in calculation whose end is efficiency. Generalisation and mediocrity submerge the unique and the vital. Indeed the individual becomes something of an embarrassment under the pressure for standardisation such that we can today witness the curious phenomenon of 'individuality' being reconstituted in technologically convenient ways, e.g. mass-produced 'personalisation packs' for production cars, special limited edition (say 10,000?) family 'heirlooms' advertised in middle class magazines.

Here, then, are signs of the destitution of our time. A destitution which, according to Heidegger, has long been on its way, for it is a *metaphysical* destitution, one rooted in man's way of revealing Being, and the cast for this was set with the post-Socratics when the basic distinctions with which thought was to operate were disclosed as fixed and abstract categories: an idea of the thing as distinct from its existence. It is on this basis of the thing revealed in terms of certain fixed attributes – i.e. turned into an *object* – that traditional logic and science take their rise. But the trouble with this way of revealing, according to Heidegger, is that it posits things as 'ready-made', 'finished' and 'there beforehand', to be looked out upon by an independent perceiving subject. And this leaves unthought both the essential arising of things, and thus the creative powers that constitute them, sustaining them in their vital standing there, and also the fundamental way in which man is *bound in* with things. For man to extract himself from the world and thus gain a position from which to assume mastership – what better? For Nietzsche, this possibility was life-enhancing, but gave rise to the question

as to whether present man was fit for this role and led him to develop his notion of 'Overman' as the one who self-consciously posits his own values from out of himself, totally gives himself his own direction. But as Heidegger sees, the corollary of total power is total organisation, i.e. a totalitarianism of man and things. In seeking to self-assertively assert his will, man, without knowing it, is becoming subsumed by the will to power, i.e. the will to *more* power, the will to *will*. Willing becomes an end in itself, knows no limits, and consequently can ultimately acknowledge nothing outside itself as being a source of worth. When man becomes the sole conferer of values for himself, becomes the measure of all things by reckoning everything in terms of these values, he becomes incapable of genuine receptivity, of allowing nature to grant of herself. Such a man, closed in upon himself, is condemned to nihilism. This is the prospect that Heidegger sees to arise from Nietzsche's word that God is dead.[5] God, thought broadly as the realm of received ideals and values that can be acknowledged and compel, has lost its authority in our age, it no longer quickens life and has become unreal. For modern man the gods have fled and he has yet to learn how to receive things in their own being.

Here, then, would lie the challenge to education. What part might it have to play in the response to such a destitution? Should it perhaps attempt to promote the values of an alternative and competing 'non-technological' culture? On Heidegger's account the solution could not be this simple: we cannot just go back on technology, deny it. To fall into romanticism would be both sterile and dangerous, for, as previously indicated, Heidegger holds that that mode of revealing which forms the essence of technology has been set on its way such that its history is our history. It would be absurd to suppose that we could by any 'unilateral' decision of ours wholly dissociate ourselves from it, even if we were willing to accept the economic and material consequences of the attempt. On the contrary, to seek to turn our back on technology would just be to allow it greater freedom, for, as part of modern man's essence, the attempt itself would have the character of a self-centred manipulation, only another manifestation of the technological essence, the will to power. Rather, the part of education must be to help us discern a way of living *through* technology, that is, to engender an understanding of technology – and therefore of ourselves – which enables a transcendence of it, and, by this token, of the whole of the Western metaphysical tradition. But for any of this to be possible it would be vital to show a ground towards which thought could begin to move and from which one could genuinely stand outside technology so as to view it in its essence. No technology, no science, can ever have an appreciation of its own essence: the essence of technology is nothing technological, any more than the essence of mathematics could ever be represented in a purely mathematical statement. This means that at the heart of an understanding and an education that is to be truly relevant to our time lies the man/Being question. We must, and an education must help us to, begin to see technology from the perspective of a more adequate understanding of the relationship between man and Being.

But let us halt here for a moment. *Is* it really plausible to think of modern man as destitute in the way suggested, no longer receptive to things? To take a form of thinking which is often regarded as paradigmatic of modern rationality, is not science at least directed towards things as they really are? For example, Popper's whole view of scientific progress is based on the idea of the possibility of falsification, a determination to acknowledge things that *dis*confirm its theories. And does not the grounding principle of rationality – impartiality – precisely articulate a concern to eschew subjectiveness, distorting self-will? Heidegger might be thought to say what he does because the sciences, say, are not *in fact* impartial; at any particular time particular paradigms hold sway which tend not to acknowledge that which is not congenial. But perhaps this is only a contingent matter, a weakness in human enterprise which could be overcome. Instances of a scientist's reluctance to allow recalcitrant evidence to refute a paradigm by declaring it irrelevant or by devising *ad hoc* hypotheses to dispose of it, while not unheard of, perhaps do not demonstrate that this is *necessary* to science. But this is not Heidegger's point (although if it is a tendency it is not altogether beside the point). It is not that science does not take any notice of how things are, but rather the *sort* of notice it takes and the way it sets things up for itself. Scientific impartiality – even as an ideal – only comes into operation at a certain relatively superficial level which is rooted in an often unrecognised, 'secret', partiality. Far from being value-free – in the sense that Heidegger's analysis of the will to power suggests to be necessary for genuine receptivity – science has already subordinated everything it attends to, to the value of levelling and possessive explanation. As seeking to have, contain, that which it enquires after, from the beginning it fixes things as objects with stable attributes (even if one of these attributes is its instability as, say, in the case of radioactive substances). It sets things up as orderable, covering over the open and creative. Indeed in the exact sciences so powerful has this willing become that we can witness the dissolution of even the object itself as it becomes further hypostatised and secured as an instance of a mathematical expression. Here, as Heidegger points out, is a clear indication of how science is already under the sway of the essence of technology. It was no committee of researchers who dictated that 'physics must resign itself ever increasingly to the fact that its realm of representation remains inscrutable and incapable of being visualised'. Rather it is 'challenged forth' by the holding sway of the essence of technology – 'the rule of Enframing that demands that nature be orderable as standing reserve'.[6]

But, now, what does it mean to say that the thing exists in its own way such that technological enframing could destroy it by grasping it as an object? I have said that through its motive to account for the thing – stabilise it and bring it into useful connection with other things through representation and judgement – the thing becomes increasingly fixed, levelled off, and 'dealt with', such that it is no longer allowed to live on in its own way. But how does, say, a purely material thing 'live on in its own way'? The answer is that no real thing is adequately described as purely material; indeed, it will be claimed that thinking it in purely material terms is only possible on the basis of

a framework which is not itself materialistic at all.

Let me try to illustrate this by reference to an example of the sort that Heidegger uses. Consider a sacrificial chalice. What is it that constitutes it as the thing that it is (or, more accurately, *was,* for now it is only, perhaps, an archaeological find – but this is to anticipate the point)? Is it the material – the silver – of which it is composed? The answer must surely be yes, *but only partly so.* For it only exists as a sacrificial chalice in a particular sort of world – its world. It arises and is sustained as the thing that it is only in the world of a particular living cultural tradition, and when this world decays the chalice in its essential nature decays, such that now it exists only as a collected object which, perhaps, we may admire aesthetically or find curious as an object, but which has lost its own life. We may, of course, artificially reconstruct its world through historical research, etc. but this is no longer reality: the chalice cannot come to presence for us just as it did in the time of its making. The chalice, then, is itself only in its world, which has now passed. It is its world which enables it as the thing that it is. This conditions its physical form, the appropriateness of its materials, its 'sacrificialness' and, importantly, it – the chalice – at the same time plays a part in enabling its world, for a culture is nothing without its things. Thing and culture exist in a relationship of mutual appropriation and all this is left untouched and covered over by a thinking that grasps things as fixed objects so as to 'explain' them by relating them to other similarly established 'facts'.

But now, will it not be objected that this argument works here, if at all, because the example was itself a cultural artifact? Well, before meeting this objection directly, let us just note that such artifacts form a very significant class of things for man, expressing as they do the way in which he is dwelling in his world. Presently, I shall attempt to show how Heidegger allows them a certain precedence on these grounds. But, to come back to the objection; let us consider something that seemingly has stood and still stands quite independently of any culture: a mountain. In what sense does the mountain live? Clearly it may support an array of biological living, but this as such is not what we are talking about. Is not, then, the mountain 'itself' composed of rock or ultimately, perhaps, the fundamental particles or energy quantums of physics? Certainly – in its being as an object of physical science. But is this what it is in its essence. Equally this mountain might come to presence as a source of mineral ore. But is this what it is in its essence? It might now appear as if the mountain, being 'cultureless' in the sense in which the chalice is not, 'lives' according to the purposeful gaze of those who look upon it. But then on what grounds could it be said that the scientific/technological gaze destroys it in its essence? Why should one way of relating to it be any more fundamental, or 'truthful', or 'revealing', than any other? To give force to any such claim requires some general demonstration that certain modes of revealing – namely those which involve the representation of the thing – are derivative upon, and, in coming to dominate, cover over, other more essential modes of revealing.

Heidegger's argument on this point seems to be as follows.[7] In representing

something to himself man sets it apart from himself as an object over against a subject, attributing to it certain objective properties. But in order for him to represent it in this way, it must in some sense *already* be visible to him, otherwise the necessary judgements could not occur. To see, say, the mountain as a heap of rock or atoms or whatever – to represent it to himself as this particular sort of object with its particular objective properties – is only possible within the realm of a certain prior openness of revealing, and as a narrowing of this openness. In its object-being the thing is only that which is predicated of it, but such predication is only possible if man is *already* dwelling with the thing in some sense. However, preoccupied with representational thinking, the nature of this more primordial dwelling is now strange to us, for it is withdrawn from us. Though it is presupposed by a mode of revealing which operates through defining categories it is at the same time forgotten by it. In revealing things as mere objects, representational thought by necessity denies them for what they are in their essence: not entities apart from man to be looked out upon and subjected to scrutiny and calculation – weighed up and filed – but *gatherings of man's own dwelling.* By this is meant that things are vital concretisations of those original powers that hold sway in a culture and enable a world of human significances. In its time the chalice would have gathered man's dwelling in this way, so too, to turn to another of Heidegger's examples, would the Greek temple for the ancients. Standing there upon the hillside the temple opens up a world in which things emerge through their relation to it:

> . . . the building rests on rocky ground. This resting of the work draws up out of the rock the mystery of that rock's clumsy yet spontaneous support. Standing there, the building holds its ground against the storm raging above it and so first makes the storm itself manifest in its violence. The lustre and gleam of the stone, though itself apparently glowing only by the grace of the sun, yet first brings to light the light of the day, the breadth of the sky, the darkness of the night. The temple's firm towering makes visible the invisible space of the air. The steadfastness of the work contrasts with the surge of the surf, and its own repose brings out the raging of the sea . . . . The temple in its standing there, first gives to things their look and to men their outlook on themselves.[8]

Here we begin to see the importance of genuine artifacts for dwelling. Such artifacts are in essence a *response* rather than an imposition of man's self-will. The temple, the chalice, each in its own way and in its own time participates in, by bringing forth in particular form, the interplay of those basic powers which enable man, motivate his dwelling. But what can be said of these basic powers themselves? Here I can do no more than baldly assert that Heidegger sees them as a unified fourfold: man exists out

of his essence by dwelling upon the earth by preserving it, beneath the sky by receiving it, before the gods by awaiting them, and in the face of his own mortality by initiating himself into it. Earth, sky, gods and mortality; he dwells with these by bringing forth things, and by letting them be – letting them *thing* as gatherings of those powers to which authentic culture is a response and historical embodiment.

Clearly much needs to be said about the validity and status of this 'fourfold'. As far as I am aware Heidegger himself makes no attempt to justify it in traditional terms of logical disputation, but seems to see them as in some sense self-evident. I can only say (somewhat lamely? – this itself is part of the question) that they touch certain chords with me, and assert my belief that whether or not his particular attempt to articulate them succeeds, it is necessary to make the attempt.[9] Certainly his espousing of them highlights fundamental questions about the ground rules of his thinking which this paper cannot go into, at least not directly. The brief exposition presented here can only hope to hint at the direction which his thinking is feeling towards (he would be the first to say that his thinking is only a beginning, a getting underway): that things are particular gatherings of man's dwelling; that he dwells by staying with them, in and through them, and that objects with their 'objective' properties are abstractions from this. The more objectivised they become the more emptied of dwelling – and therefore in a certain sense alienating – they become, until eventually the thing itself in its essential mystery is annihilated, as when, for example, the shining of colour is transmuted through rational analysis into measured wavelengths. Why is this? It is because all such attempts at enframing involve the use of standards which are external to the thing itself, and the thing is precisely that which cannot be levelled off through standardisation. When this occurs it passes away, leaving only objects. To reveal things as things we must be willing to participate in them, rather than set them apart from ourselves as objects set up and on call for rational inspection. And to participate in them means to stay with them in their gathering the fourfold, as those powers within whose interplay humanness itself is sent on its way.

Clearly Heidegger here presents us with a critique of the traditional Western metaphysical conception of thinking of a most radical kind, and this itself stands in need of further exploration and critical evaluation. But before this is attempted, let us again briefly indicate something of the consequence such a view would seem to hold out for education. It has already been noted that it would be a central task of an education which was to make a positive response to the metaphysical destitution of our time to attempt to discern a path for thinking which might lead to a transcendence of the technological mode of revealing which is at present in the ascendent. It can now be seen that for Heidegger the achievement of this would require the fostering of a sort of thinking which is precisely denied by much with which education conventionally concerns itself: the development of the intellect through the acquisition of an increasing range of categories for the operation of representational thought. This is what lies at the heart of what at present counts as an academic education, which in large measure

continues to set the standard for intellectual development itself, and where detachment and critical analysis and reconstruction explicit in the sciences are just as dominant if sometimes less immediately apparent in the arts. Of course on a Heideggerian account it is hardly surprising that this should be so, for education has no less been conditioned by the holding sway of the essence of technology than anything else in our time. Yet it may be through education that a start could be made on a new path. At the least there is a challenge to recognise a more wholistic and less analytically orientated conception of intellectual development and of the relationship between man and Being, and a call to re-examine the whole notion of a liberal education, which, through an overriding concern for initiation into areas of knowledge for their own sake, remains aloof to the particular problems of our historical time. On the first of these counts some recognition has already occurred, as with, for example, R.K. Elliott's exploration of the notion of understanding, which reveals a richness of facets not readily accommodated in terms of developing 'categorial apparatus'.[10] On the second of these counts the manifest danger of arbitrary interpretations of our historical situation which the very difficulty of the task makes likely and to which a 'free floating' liberal education would seem to be impervious, while counselling caution must not lead to paralysis. It is its very dissociation from the motives of our time that threaten such a liberal education with vacuity, and signs of destitution of the kind previously indicated make an adequate metaphysical interpretation of our time a pressing need.

Looking back over what has been said so far it is apparent that one of the central things to emerge through Heidegger's account of our growing destitution is an outline of what would seem to be two opposing ways of thinking: the rational self-assertive or 'calculative' and the receptive–responsive or 'meditative'. In bringing these two fundamental ways of relating to Being into sharp relief he underlines a crucial dilemma for modern man: how to pick a way between quietism and the will to total power with its attendant requirement of total organisation. In order to see more clearly what is at stake here and thus move into a position to take further the challenge posed to education, it will be helpful to refer briefly to some distinctions he wishes to draw between modern technology and 'older' technology or craft.

To return to the example of the silver chalice given earlier. Heidegger wishes to draw an important distinction between the production of the chalice and the production of articles in modern manufacturing. For him, there was a time when the silversmith would not have been conceived of as a manufacturer in the sense of efficient cause which has come to dominate our modern conception of causality and making, but as someone who has *brought forth* the chalice – is responsible for its occasioning – by pondering and gathering the creative forces of the tradition which gives it its bounds. He does not decide and fix beforehand the precise properties of the metal required, what the chalice is to look like, what is or is not sacrificial, but participates in the interplay of these enabling forces assuming joint responsibility for bringing the chalice

into appearance.[11] His stance is one of co-operation with nature and culture. This is to be contrasted with a manufacturing which fabricates according to some pre-given blueprint, set up by man's self-will, whereby the object is a product of a challenging rather than a responding, and the chief problem is how to produce it with the maximum yield for the minimum outlay. Here what is wanted in all its significant detail is decided in *advance* and nature is then challenged to provide the necessary reserves for the processing which is to be set in train. The element of empathetic responsiveness which pervaded older technology and craft Heidegger refers to as *poetic building*. It is neither pure passivity nor self-wilful, but a caring and tending in which man emerges as a sort of midwife to things rather than their masterful inventor and fabricator. Thus, to take another example:

> The field that the peasant formerly cultivated and set in order appears different from how it did when to set in order still meant to take care of and maintain. The work of the peasant does not challenge the soil of the field. In sowing grain it places seed in the keeping of the forces of growth and watches over its increase.[12]

The central point, then, is that with older technology we still await and respond to nature's granting, a disposing in her own way and in her own good time, in which her integrity is thus preserved and revealed. It has been suggested that something (though perhaps only a little) of this notion is maintained in the difference between, say, sailing and power boating.[13] In the former one needs to be much more in tune with nature – take proper account of tides, wind force and direction etc. – whereas in the latter these forces can be largely overridden and forgotten – you just turn the throttle up and close the windows. And to the extent to which these forces need to be remembered, it is rather as an obstacle to be broken down than something with which to be in accord. When viewed from their essence, in sailing you are, as it were, in there *with* nature in a way in which you are not when power boating.

However, this distinction is far from being straightforward. To begin with, it is nearly always a matter of degree – little is pure here and much is hybrid. It is neither Heidegger's thesis that at some past time man lived entirely poetically (in the sense indicated) and that now he does not, nor that all forms of activity can be seen as falling neatly into one or other category. To interpret things in this way would be to fall into precisely the categorising way of thinking that Heidegger is trying to break out of. Rather it is that one way of revealing is on the way to totally eclipsing another, and the upshot of the completion of this will be a destitution to which it would be hard to forsee an end. For as a metaphysical destitution it will exclude all genuine alternatives and when their trace is completely lost it is hard to see how they would be recovered.

But there is another – and educationally highly important – way in which the

distinction between rational self-assertive thinking and responsive thinking is not straightforward, and this can be brought out by posing a question in respect of his example of the peasant farmer. Here the peasant is depicted as one who waits upon nature, but how would this square with the idea of him storing the grain he has grown? Would this not represent a break with the principle of waiting upon nature? We have a notion of a tending which maintains and enhances things as they are in themselves irrespective of any value that man may confer upon them out of his self-will. But, now, does this mean that man is supposed to wait totally submissively upon nature? Is he supposed to sit by attempting nothing to improve his conditions, do nothing to ameliorate unwelcome outcomes of nature's caprices? What would be his response, say, to the prospect of a drought? Is he to 'tend' it, 'enhance' it, so that it may come to presence in the fullest possible way, wreak the maximum devastation? There also arises here a suspicion that in refusing any mastery over what may befall him, man is attempting to abrogate personal responsibility for his own life – Sartrean 'bad faith'.

However, we should be wary of attributing any such consequences to Heidegger's thinking. He is often at pains to emphasize that how we should *act* is not now, for us, a straightforward affair. If we are not to be helplessly carried along by technology either by unthinkingly participating in it or rebelling against it – a purely negative 'anti-ness' – we must act in genuinely new ways, and this requires that we first come to think in a genuinely new way. It would seem that our response to the threatening drought is to be neither totally submissive nor self-willing, but would arise out of our dwelling – and therefore *building* – in the region of the 'fourfold'. Just now it was felt necessary to place the words 'tend' and 'enhance' in quotes because it was not clear what they would mean in the context of responding to a drought. The question has to be raised as to how something like a drought will reveal itself from the point of view of gathering the fourfold. It may be that storage and distribution of resources is not always of the same character. Its character may depend upon the spirit in which it is done. Perhaps nature would not be 'denied' as long as our relationship to it remains an acknowledgement rather than an overcoming which dismisses and forgets, i.e. storing the grain may be a way of acknowledging the power of the drought providing it is not put at a forgetful distance by becoming empty habit, or by being dealt with by 'technology' such that we remain insulated from it and it intrudes upon our existence only as, say, a business or financial consideration – just one of many such levelled-off factors to be taken into account and dealt with by our ordering. But this, of course, is a purely negative characterisation; how we build poetically in our time is precisely that which remains to be thought. The examples given only indicate how a people built in *their* time. Despite immediate impressions to the contrary, it is not Heidegger's contention that we should or could attempt to return to some supposed past 'golden age'. Yet consideration of the way in which modern technology insulates us from the spontaniety and risk of Being – the ways in which it seeks to ensure against disturbance of its own self-containment

– may of itself give rise to thought of that which this denies.

It is with respect to this problem that Heidegger sees art as having the potential to make a contribution to our need. It has been emphasised that we cannot just dissociate ourselves from technology and that this means that the way forward must somehow arise out of technology itself as a form of self-transcendence. The problem, then is to think technology in a way which would enable this, i.e. to think it in its essence. Because the essence of technology is itself nothing technological, this requires us to stand outside technology, and this may bring us to the realm of art, but in a questioning way – for art itself is subject to the increasing holding sway of technology. As the ground from which the essence of technology is to be disclosed, art could no longer be thought as having its essence in the merely aesthetic. According to Heidegger, if we are to think art in a way which allows it to reveal technology in its essence we will be led beyond the stock categories of the aesthetic and the 'artistic' – the realm of 'connoisseurship'. Rather we will come to think art as a primal way of bringing forth, i.e. as *techne* in the old Greek sense. Here Heidegger recalls a time when:

> . . . the arts soared to the supreme height of the revealing granted to them . . . illuminated the presence of the gods and the dialogue of the human and divine destinings.[14]

Then the arts were not derived from the artistic, were not merely enjoyed aesthetically, were not just a sector of cultural activity, but 'a revealing that brought forth and made present', i.e. *a form of truth.*

Such art is akin to technology in that it is a form of revealing, yet it is not a wilful ordering, closing-off, way of revealing. Rather the work of art can open up a world – create a free space – beyond all evaluating and manipulating, in which things are let be as themselves. The work proper does not represent the thing, it is no mere copy, but allows the thing itself to come to presence, indeed so that we may come to see *it* for the first time. Thus, for example, Van Gogh's painting of the peasant shoes somehow evokes the world of the peasant woman and thus reveals the shoes for what they are in themselves. Similarly, according to Heidegger, the Greek tragedies were not for the Greeks a mere theatrical performance of old stories, but a place in which the powers that shape their culture come into play and do battle; where through the living word what is holy or unholy, noble or base, lofty or flighty, etc. is put up for decision.[15] In entering the work one participates in this creative strife, enjoins the interplay of the fourfold. Art as poetry in its various forms does not moralise, assert, but says what is. It is a responding 'saying' not an ordering stating, and its truth is the purer – the more fundamentally open – than truth as correctness which statements enable.

Perhaps one is tempted to object here that even if we were to accept this account, allow to the arts the capacity for this sort of truth, what good is it to us? How could such thinking, such truth help us to tackle technology – how could we *use* such truth,

what can we *do* with it? The reply, of course, is that it may be less a case of what we can do with it and more a case of what it might do with us.

In this paper I have tried to explain Heidegger's view of technology: its pervasiveness as a mode of revealing, that which is holding sway in it, and that which is denied by it. In my account I have emphasised the way in which, for Heidegger, technological enframing is not just a feature of those limited areas of thinking conventionally thought of as technical, but has come to characterise rational thinking in a far broader sense, *viz.* wherever it 'reckons things up' according to values it has devised for itself, whether it be in the sciences or the arts. And I have attempted to contrast this with a more receptive poetic or meditative thinking, which is marked by an absence of such self-assertiveness such that a more direct involvement in the gathering of things is possible. Finally, I have intimated something of the challenge that such considerations pose for education, the claim being that in a destitute time such as ours, contemporary conceptions of education and of human nature that inform them are themselves destitute. In the final part of this paper I will endeavour to show how this is true of two current humanistic traditions in education:

1.   the liberal/rationalist;
2.   the humanistic Marxian.

The liberal/rationalist tradition in education goes back at least as far as Plato, and today remains influential through, for example, the writings of R.S. Peters and P.H. Hirst. In such works as *The Logic of Education, Knowledge and the Curriculum* and the collection *Education and the Development of Reason* it is maintained both that the development of rationality in its various forms is central to education and that this and any other educational claim should itself be defensible in rational terms, i.e. thinking both within and about education is to be rationally grounded. Now the vital question that arises from the viewpoint expressed in this paper is what order of being is holding sway that rationality aspires to set the standard for thinking in relation to education: what way are we on here and what relationship does it embody between man and Being? Perhaps the first thing to be noted is that the tradition itself never poses this question. It *assumes* that it is man's essence to be rational and takes off from there. It assumes therefore that knowledge, as an authentic product of man's relationship with the world, is itself classifiable in terms of rational values and categories and that each of these categories is itself a category of rationality. Thus through its fundamental propensity for defining and ordering, the tradition itself has become an expression of the coming to dominance of the calculative essence of technology and brings with it an inevitable tendency for meditative thinking to be disvalued and forgotten. Because the latter is not a way of systematically representing reality it becomes thought of as worthless, and because its canons are not those of the rational self-assertive thinking

into which the 'educated' are becoming habituated, it comes to seem not only worthless but unintelligible, i.e. no sort of thinking at all.

The extent of this destitution is illustrated by a tendency in this tradition to subvert those enterprises which are in their true nature meditative by trying to think them in calculative terms. I have in mind here not merely attempts at, say, subordinating the arts to external (e.g. political) ends as in Plato and others, but attempts to technologise the arts by thinking them *as of their own nature* calculative. Paul Hirst's attempt to set up literature and the fine arts as a form of rational knowledge is, I think, quite a good example of this.[16] He claims that the arts are properly characterised as somehow making statements which can be assessed for their truth or falsity according to socially devised criteria and that these lend them objectivity and provide their justification for a place in a liberal education. But this is pure rationalistic dogma. It assumes unquestioningly that man's essence is to define and represent things to himself as against letting them shine forth as they are through participation *in* them. Like all metaphysical positions it pays no attention to its warrant for setting things up in its way, for in its oblivion of Being it overlooks the fact that it represents a particular relationship with Being at all.

It is in this way that its essential irrelevance arises. An essential irrelevance which is born out of an essential irreverence. Lacking a reverence for Being it lacks a proper sense of historicity and therefore of the problems of our time as an epoch of Being. No doubt it is correct that in some sense education should be relevant to the needs of the individual or of society, but these needs are rarely understood in terms of the relationship to Being that is holding sway in our time. They are seen increasingly only from *within* the perspective of technological enframing. And the oft espoused ideal of liberal education – rational autonomy – which is frequently justified in terms of providing an individual with categories of understanding which are fundamental to the perception and satisfying of his own and social needs would, if achieved, do nothing to enhance the capacity for openness to Being in which the essence of these needs lies, and might be disclosed. Such is the arrogance and poverty of pure reason, which operates relatively undisturbed and rootlessly within the categories which it has set up for itself.

Rootlessness and ahistoricity are not charges that are normally levelled at Marxist perspectives on education. And the humanism of the 'early' Marx might seem to provide a way of expressing concerns both for man's self-realisation and for a growing destitution through its central notions of 'creative labour' and 'alienation'. However, underlying this parallelism of concern it will be held that there remain crucial differences of interpretation such that it is possible to raise similar criticisms of Marx as of the liberal/rational tradition. If in the tradition of liberal education man's self-realisation consisted in the development of forms of rationality, for the humanistic Marx it consisted in a practical mastery of nature. Through such 'creative labour' man is distinguished from animals (achieves his 'species-being') and thus enters into his true relationship with the world – an objective world which he produces for himself.[17] It

follows, then, that the most fundamental form of alienation for Marx's humanism is when the individual loses control over the conditions and products of his labour.

Now this production of a human world through an ongoing exploitation of nature to meet man's evolving needs is clearly humanism in the strong sense of placing man at the centre of creation – and given this fundamental stance, there would be a certain consistency in Marx to conceive Utopia in terms of material plentifulness, and of economic forces as determining human destiny. It would also follow that education would be centrally concerned with the acquisition of knowledge, attitudes and skills which will enable man on the one hand to be more efficient and far-reaching in his appropriation of nature, and on the other in the creation of a society in which the labourer regains control over the conditions of his labour, and wherein the value given to the product is a reflection of the labour that went into it.

Sketchy and hugely simplified as this account is, it is sufficient to illustrate a clear difference between Marx and Heidegger concerning the nature of authentic labour. In contrast to Marx's claim for the appropriation of nature by man, for Heidegger the authentic relationship between man and Being is one of *mutual* appropriation. Being cannot be revealed in its fullness through acts of mastery, for this necessarily involves subjugation of that which is mastered. Thus creativity for Heidegger is not a matter of invention and production in the service of man's self-given wants and values, but a receptiveness to, and facilitating of, that which in some sense is already awaiting recognition and expression. Authentic labour for Heidegger, then, is not a manipulative modification of the environment, but a bringing to presence of new possiblities and demands for his responsive participation in the process of creation itself. It is a striving which nonetheless reposes in the granting of Being, for man's essential relationship with Being is not one of opposition, but belonging. From this standpoint the essence of Marx's materialism becomes visible as not that it posits the world as merely matter and subject to the laws of matter, but that it posits the world as present subject to human wants and values, i.e. objectified as material for their satisfaction and furtherance. Thus Marxian alienation as man dispossessed of the conditions of his labour takes its start from a conception of man's essence which *already* constitutes the alienation of man from his essence for Heidegger, and which has clearly become technologised in his terms. Thus an education arising from humanistic Marxism with the 'of the world' worldliness implicit in its elevation of mastery and political consciousness would in fact be seriously dehumanising through leading only to the furtherance of our oblivion of Being.

Herein, then, lies the essential destitution of such conceptions of education: the reproduction of a situation in which man is increasingly unlikely to receive a responsive, and therefore truly responsible, orientation towards Being. And in a time so destitute the present welter of information and reasoning which technology increasingly makes available to all is both worthless and harmful. Indeed, as Heidegger points out, there is something unearthly about the way modern techniques of communication have made

sensational events from all over the globe closer to man than the earth underfoot and the passing of night into day, closer than the tradition of his native world.[18]

Thus it becomes a crucial issue for philosophy of education as to the part that education may play in a building such that we who are increasingly submerged in the standardisation and levelled-off revealing of our time – where the 'constipated originality' of ingenuity and inventiveness stand substitute for the bringing forth of the genuinely creative – may learn to be responsive.

With this question acknowledged as a leading one for philosophy of education, a genuine attempt to ask concerning the man/Being relationship would also constitute a central component of a general education, to be rethought by each individual against the backdrop of his own experiences and involvement in the world. Perhaps a gradual movement towards a more adequate experience of it may be achieved through the pointing and evocation that attending to the signs of the destitution of our time may enable. In our time the hope must be that an individual's increasing awareness and sensitivity to our destitution might allow that which is at present withdrawn to be more keenly felt, and such traces as may thus be uncovered to indicate a way forward. It has already been suggested that the arts in their poetic aspect could have a crucial role to play here, but above all else such an enterprise demands a thinking whose rigour derives not from obeisance to defining categories and the interconnections which are derivable from them, but to a determination to be open to signs on its way and the mystery of what is – the fluidity and spontaneity of Being. The fostering of thinking as a genuine journey towards the unknown – if education is to come any way towards meeting the challenge revealed in Heidegger's analysis of technology, no less a response will serve.

Notes and references

1. This is a revised version of a paper first given at the conference 'Controversies in Philosophy and Education' held at Homerton College, Cambridge, in September 1980.

2. Heidegger, M. (1927) 'What are Poets for?', in Hofstadter, Albert (trans.) (1975) *Poetry, Language, Thought* (New York, Harper).

3. Heidegger, M. (1953) 'The Question Concerning Technology', in Lovitt, William (trans.) (1977) *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* (New York, Harper).

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5. Heidegger, M. (1943) 'The Word of Nietzsche', in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays, op. cit.*

6. *The Question Concerning Technology, op. cit.*

7. See Heidegger, M. (1930) 'On the Essence of Truth', in Krell, D. (ed.) (1978) *Martin Heidegger, Basic Writings* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul).

8. Heidegger, M. (1935) 'The Origin of the Work of Art', in *Poetry, Language, Thought, op. cit.*

9. I would also refer the reader to two essays where he attempts to reveal them in detail not possible here: 'The Thing' (1950) and 'Building, Dwelling, Thinking' (1951), both in *Poetry, Language, Thought, op. cit.*

10. Elliott, R.K. (1974) 'Education, Love of One's Subject, and the Love of Truth', *Proceedings of the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain,* VIII, January 1974.

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13. Alderman, H. (1978) 'Heidegger's Critique of Science and Technology', in Murray, M. (ed.) (1978) *Heidegger and Modern Philosophy* (London, Yale).

14. *The Question Concerning Technology, op. cit.*

15. See 'The Origin of the Work of Art', *op. cit.*

16. See Hirst, P.H. (1974), *Knowledge and the Curriculum* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul).

17. See, for example, *Economic and Political Manuscripts,* p. 127 and Capital I, pp. 177–8.

18. Heidegger, M. (1955) *Discourse on Thinking* (Trans. Anderson, J.M. and Freund, E.H.) (1966) (New York, Harper & Row).

EDUCATION, KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICES

Paul H. Hirst

In the 1960s and 1970s British philosophy of education was born, or reborn, under the spell of the analytical techniques then dominating British philosophy in general. But it was born, too, under the spell of a hard rationalism that profoundly determined its substantive content and the major educational principles for which it argued. Since then both those spells have been broken. New approaches have arisen in philosophy in general and other traditions have firmly reasserted themselves. Quietly the character and scope of philosophy of education have changed significantly, and, though recent work may sometimes seem less exciting, new developments of importance are surely taking place and intellectually, if not institutionally, the prospects for the subject are very promising. In these circumstances it is not surprising if our understanding of the central concept of education has itself begun to change, and in this essay I wish to argue that, putting it crudely, we must shift from seeing education as primarily concerned with knowledge to seeing it as primarily concerned with social practices. But let me stress right away that I am drawing attention to different primary concerns and am not naively suggesting that even at the start of the analytical movement there was not a sophisticated concern for many other matters, including social practices.[1]

I

In giving the acquisition of knowledge and understanding supreme priority within education, philosophers of education in the 1960s were deeply influenced by a number of powerful philosophical doctrines. First there was a strong view of what it is to be a person. The great diversity of human capacities was for convenience frequently, if implicitly, categorised into three domains. The cognitive were seen as those capacities concerned with, for example, perception, concept formation, judgements of truth and validity, choice, reason, memory and imagination; the affective were those

concerned, for example, with experiences of sensation, emotion, liking and desiring; the conative were those concerned with, for example, action, disposition and will. But if analytically distinguishable in this way there was no doubt that affective and conative capacities were of their nature necessarily structured by and limited in their intelligible operation by the concepts, belief and knowledge achieved by the cognitive capacities. The substantive constitution of a person therefore was seen as necessarily grounded in a cognitive repertoire, its non-cognitive dimensions being ordered or disordered according to that repertoire.

In keeping with this emphasis was the view that the central function of cognitive capacities is the formation of conceptual schemes in which judgements of truth can be made and that thence can be achieved bodies of justifiable or rational beliefs, rational actions, and indeed rational emotions. Grounded in knowledge and understanding, human beings can thus aspire to live in conformity with what is the case, what is objectively and naturally given in human nature and in the environment in which human beings find themselves. Such a form of life was further seen not merely as a logical possibility but as a practical ideal, the good life, to which all should aspire, difficult though it may be to attain for many contingent reasons. The justification for that notion of the good life was taken to lie, first, in certain forms of transcendental argument, which held that there can be no more ultimately justifiable pursuits than the intrinsically worthwhile pursuit of reason in all its forms, and, second, in the successful ordering of all other human concerns in terms made possible by the achievements of reason into a coherent and consistent whole. In this ideal the form of the rational life for each individual may be genuinely open-ended, and, granted the differences between individuals and between their contexts, only each individual can ultimately decide what defensible possibilities there are. Freedom of individual choice is thus of course central to the good life. But that choice has to be exercised according to the dictates of reason, and the commonalities of human nature and the environment are such that reason dictates a broad common framework for the rational life for all. At least certain general fundamental social principles, in particular those of liberal democracy, can be strongly defended as universally valid if reason is to prevail in both communal and personal living.

A further tenet consistent with these doctrines concerned the practical conduct of the good or rational life. This was construed as determined by first rationally formulating and justifying the ends to be achieved in activities and practices using all the knowledge and understanding available. The most justifiable means to these ends could then be decided and those means implemented by the exercise of will using all appropriate skills and aided by habit and disposition.

Finally, I should like to draw out the significance in this view of social relations. In the first place the development of reason is seen as a fundamentally social construction. It is only through shared conceptual schemes that objective judgements are possible and it is in the creation of public languages alone that knowledge and understanding can be achieved and secured as a progressively developing public deposit. Language is thus a

necessary key to the development of reason and rational living. In this sense, but in this sense alone, rational persons are socially constructed. In the second place, society is itself seen as simply a collection of freely associating individuals. By organising themselves in families, groups and communities, individuals can the more readily survive and secure many of their goals. And through language their social arrangements can themselves be rationally constructed. In the good life, then, they are linked together primarily in their individual pursuit of life according to rational principles. It is the good will of each member that holds communities and groups together.

Put in these brief terms this philosophical position, which owed so much to the tradition of the liberal enlightenment and incorporated numerous achievements of contemporary logical analysis, was and remains impressive. From an educational point of view its concern for a particular view of the rational, autonomous life provided a clear coherent framework for the formation of educational aims. Planning for educational practice was conceived as a matter for the rational determination of the ends to be pursued, the subsequent determination of the best means possible and finally the implementation of the conclusions reached. The aims were first and foremost those of developing knowledge and understanding and the further pursuit of those as being both intrinsically worthwhile and vital to the ordering of developments in all other aspects of personal and social living. To this end the forms of knowledge and understanding that have been achieved were logically mapped and the diversity of the cognitive objectives involved was explored for their logical interrelations. A stipulative notion of liberal education, defined in terms of initiation into the forms of knowledge as characterised by their distinctive internal, logical features was set out as the core of a wider education. That wider domain, however, was clearly seen as secondary. It contained useful knowledge and skills appropriate for practical life according to context but in addition there was to be personal and social education to promote the developments of character necessary to the conduct of rational living both individually and in social contexts. This last was conceived of primarily as a matter of moral education in the light of rationally justified principles both universal and local. It was here that the education of the emotions and of dispositions would combine to provide an appropriate network of virtues for the exercise of rational choice and the practical living of the good life.

II

Even while this radically 'rationalist' approach to education was being developed there were repeated signs of unease with it, unease arising from longstanding criticisms of certain of its crucial philosophical underpinnings, internal contradictions that appeared in working out the details and recurrent worries about its applicability. In particular there were grave doubts in many quarters about the primacy over all else of reason. It might be accepted that cognitive capacities have the logical significance

for other capacities that are attributed to them. But that is not to accept that those capacities can in fact operate in independence of other given human characteristics or that the knowledge and understanding their exercise achieves can then be so directed as to bring about the rational ordering both of individual human lives and of human society. In direct opposition to the tradition that sees reason as capable of disengaged knowledge and understanding, not only of the external environment but of all human characteristics, even including reason itself, there is to be found another tradition of similar philosophical power. In that tradition reason is seen as of its nature directed in its operation by wants and desires that are of course essentially affective and conative in their character. Much of the analytical work beloved of philosophers of education in the 1960s itself powerfully undermined the dissociation of cognitive and other mental capacities that was at times being assumed in the 'rationalist' position. What is more, the form of body–mind dualism being espoused was equally forcefully being rejected by many philosophical colleagues.

It is not surprising then that alongside the 'rationalist' approach previously outlined an alternative account of educational aims developed based on more 'utilitarian' presuppositions. In this the capacities of reason were seen as necessarily exercised in the service of substantive naturally given wants and desires, whose satisfaction is in certain cases necessary for human survival and in all cases fundamental to human well-being. From this point of view the conceptual schemes by which we make sense of our environment, ourselves and our actions are primarily concerned with the achievement of satisfactions we seek in response to natural functions and in the exercise of our naturally given capacities. The exercise of reason and the knowledge and understanding it makes possible are primarily practical in their significance. They are concerned with the taking of means to ends which are in the last analysis naturally given. And as we take those means, reason helps us to order our wants, achieve maximum satisfaction and provide priorities when wants conflict. Not that wants must be taken merely as simple givens, for in relation to our environment and in the exercise of our wide-ranging capacities the forms of satisfaction we can devise are richly varied. Our wants thus become differentiated into specific yet interrelated and complex patterns according to the diverse satisfactions we discern and construct.

In this picture, reason, knowledge and understanding are not at all seen as themselves capable of determining from a detached point of view the ends that constitute the good life for individuals or society. They have the instrumental functions of helping us to discern, develop and order coherently those basically given elements of wants and satisfactions from which the good life is to be composed. Nor does such a view see the dynamic of the good life as the exercise of the will enthralled in the service of reason. The dynamic is quite elsewhere, in the power over us of wants and satisfactions. To these reason and all other capacities need to be properly harnessed. The basic wants of individuals have important common characteristics, as indeed do their capacities. But,

manifestly, wants vary in specific detail, and their differentiation in terms of richly alternative satisfactions means that what constitutes the good life for an individual can in detail be determined only by that particular person. At the heart of the good life for each individual there must therefore lie personal choice, but choice which is informed by knowledge and understanding. Self-direction, self-knowledge and a knowledge of possible satisfactions are thus necessary keys to the good life. In that almost all wants and satisfactions are significantly social in their character and purport, the good life necessitates in addition a public ordering of the activities and practices to which they lead. For the individual, then, a way of life needs to be developed that is coherently ordered in private and public terms for the overall satisfaction of our wants. Granted the ultimate location of what is considered good within each individual and the importance of self-direction, the most desirable form of social life to which this view leads is understandably once more that of liberal democracy. But now its social principles are strictly utilitarian in the service of individual wants, rather than principles independently derived from the nature of reason itself and general knowledge of human beings and their environment. Resting on experience and empirical evidence in relation to the satisfaction of wants, the principles can serve directly to promote a framework within which individual good lives can be built.

In all this, society is seen once more as but a collection of atomic individuals associating together for their personal satisfactions. And the individualism is now particularly strong in that all judgements of what is good, and the motivation to attain that, rest ultimately in personal subjective states. Language continues to be seen as a social construction necessary for the rational development of each person and of society. But in no other sense are social relations anything other than contingent arrangements that promote personal satisfactions. In keeping with these philosophical doctrines, education remains a practice to be rationalistically planned, its aims once more being externally posited prior to the devising of the best means to achieve these. But now the goals education must serve are ultimately generated individually by rational choice in relation to personal wants and contextual constraints. The general content of education must therefore provide the tools for the task. It must provide skills and dispositions of manifest immediate utility. But it must develop knowledge and understanding of oneself, of the physical and social environment, of available activities and practices with their related satisfactions, and of co-ordinated ways of life. And it must promote those personal qualities and virtues necessary to achieving what is rationally desired.

III

The 'rationalist' approach to education was dependent on a high doctrine of the powers of detached reason to both determine and motivate the good life. The second approach, however, is in danger of going too far in the opposite direction, undervaluing

the role of reason in the determination of the good life and denying it any direct function in motivation. What is more, insofar as it finds a secure place for reason it still hangs on to the untenable view of reason as a disengaged, spectatorial capacity whose dissociated achievements are simply available to serve our independently given wants and desires. If the 'utilitarian' approach denies reason the transcendental status given to it by 'rationalists', it nevertheless sees it still as keeping its activities within a separate discrete domain. But if our naturally given capacities of reason are exercised from the very start in inextricable involvement in our exerting our other given capacities, then the resulting achievements will of their nature be complex in character. Elements in these achievements may be analytically distinguishable as the capacities themselves have in the first instance been distinguished. But we must never confuse such analytically discrete elements for distinct existences. We shall never make sense of ourselves if we cannot overcome those dualisms that separate the activities and achievements of reason from those of other mental capacities, or those of mind from those of body.

In seeking an account of reason that does fuller justice to its relations with other given human attributes I suggest that each of the two previous approaches does at least give us one important lead. First, following the 'rationalists', though reconstructing their account, we must recognise the motivating force of the exercise of the capacities of reason just as we recognise that force in the exercise of other capacities. The exercise of reason's capacities is itself an affective and conative matter. Only if we give recognition to the satisfactions, amongst all others, of pursuing and achieving true beliefs and justifiable actions can we ever give an adequate account of the good life. The 'utilitarian' approach I take to be right about the anchorage of values in wants and satisfactions. But the inextricable place of the activities and achievements of reason itself right within and alongside other wants and satisfactions is fundamental to our understanding of ourselves as persons, and to the determination of the good, which is the rational, life for us individually and collectively.

But secondly, following the lead of the 'utilitarian' approach in seeing the activities and achievements of reason as locked into our pursuit of satisfactions, we must take seriously the idea that reason is therefore always directed by our interests and is of its nature practical. That being so, our conceptual schemes are first concerned with distinctions relating to objects that give pleasure, pain and other primary states of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. They discriminate activities that lead to such states and these activities themselves become objects of satisfaction. The knowledge that is thus developed in practice is however also practical in that it is from the start not simply or even primarily propositional knowledge or 'know-that'. It is rather a matter of 'know-how', of skill and judgement, that is in major respects tacit or implicit rather than consciously recognised. Individual objects, situations or events are conceptually distinguished because of their practical significance for our wants and desires.

Propositional knowledge and belief are thus developments within the context of practice and are, I suggest, basically in the form of practical principles. The primary propositions that reason delivers are generalisations concerning successful and unsuccessful practice rather than distinterested truths. It is also the case that all propositional knowledge and belief is abstracted, partial, seeing situations and activities under concepts that can at best capture specific general aspects. Reason can put into propositional form only what is necessarily a limited element in any situation, trading in any given instance in categories that necessarily strip practical realities of all their other aspects, exclude unique particularities, and ignore all tacit considerations. What is more there are no good grounds for believing that any array of such general principles, however extensive, could even in principle capture the full character of practical situations.

On this view practical know-how is developed in practice itself, its prime criterion of validity being success in achieving satisfactions. By conceptualisation and generalisation, however, it is clear that reason enables us in practical experiment progressively to develop ever more diverse forms of satisfaction, generate new purposes and possiblities for personal and social activities, the taking of more effective means, the resolving of conflicts in the ordering of our satisfactions in complex patterns of consciously intended activities. Without explicit conceptualisation the rational development of practice is necessarily insecure and lacking a critical examination of its presuppositions. It is indeed also only by such conceptualisation of practices in shared linguistic terms that the peaceful resolution of social conflicts is possible and rational patterns of social life can be developed. But throughout the rational ordering of these activities the test remains the practical satisfaction of wants. In no way can practical principles be derived which individually or collectively are more than guides to the particularities of practice. Of themselves they are incapable of guaranteeing success in individual circumstances.

But what of propositional knowledge that is achieved in the seemingly spectatorial, non-practical exercise of reason in, say, the empirical knowledge of the sciences, in mathematics, or in our knowledge of persons? I suggest first that such knowledge must also be seen as the product of practices that seek a particular form of satisfaction. It is that satisfaction which arises from the successful exercise of our given capacities to share conceptual schemes in which there can be agreement in judgements of truth. Such theoretical practices, as I will call them, result in the achievements of different forms of theoretical knowledge which I long ago sought to distinguish by the logical features that characterise them. Grounded as they are in the exercise of common rational capacities in a given shared environment, these forms of knowledge can all potentially possess what we mean by objectivity, a formal characteristic which is most clearly exemplified in the physical sciences. In these areas our rational capacities achieve their satisfaction in the attaining of propositions that meet the objective criteria those capacities make possible. But a correct grasp of the status and significance of such forms of theoretical knowledge in relation to other human practices, the satisfaction of other wants, and the exercise and achievements of other capacities is of vital importance. I suggest that the propositional

knowledge achieved in particular theoretical practices is doubly abstracted from the know-how of all other practices. Theoretical knowledge in the sciences, for example, consists of propositions formulated in concepts that are not themselves properly the concepts of any practical activity or its practical principles as formulated in, say, engineering or technology. Abstracting from practice into general practical principles is one thing. Devising conceptual schemes that abstract further into practices concerned solely with judgements of propositional truth is to enter a very particular pursuit using concepts which most practical knowledge only implicitly employs. Theoretical knowledge is therefore capable of only indirectly contributing to the development of rational practice in shifting the presuppositions of practical know-how and know-that.

A great mistake of the 'rationalist' approach outlined was that it saw theoretical knowledge as the only type of knowledge that is properly significant in determining both the ends and means of rational practice and thus of the good life. It is an error of the 'utilitarian' position outlined that, if it rightly sees the ends of the good life to lie in the practical satisfaction of wants, it still sharply dissociates reason from those wants and continues to see theoretical reason as paramount if only in the determination of the means for the good life. If practical reason is given its proper place in determining the ends and the means of the good life, with the achievements of theoretical reason seen as in general ancillary, the notion of rational choice that the conduct of the good life requires can no longer be that of detached, neutral judgement of either ends or means. Rational choice can only be the development of the more adequate coherent satisfaction of important wants overall. It is necessarily a modification of present practices, which, even if aided by practical and implicit theoretical considerations, must necessarily be assessed in practice itself. There can be no detached clean slate position from which all possiblities can be assessed, for the first thing we develop as persons is the structuring of our natural wants into specific forms and patterns in practical know-how and practical know-that. In the development of rational practice there is no escaping, at any stage, given wants, their present structure, and the practical knowledge of available satisfactions that goes with these. To pretend otherwise is simply to be deceived by at least part of the 'rationalist' myth.

If both the 'rationalist' and 'utilitarian' positions are mistaken about the nature and role of reason, they are both also mistaken, as has already been indicated, in the radical individualism with which they are infected. It is of course contingently the case that the satisfaction of certain natural human wants, at least in the early stages of life, depends on social relations. It is also the case that certain natural wants are for social relations of certain kinds, even if the satisfaction of these particular wants may not be imperative. But personal activities or practices in association with others make possible, even if only in imitation, the development and organisation of satisfactions which as individuals we could never hope to discover or construct. What is more, the benefits of such development passed on in a tradition can become cumulative. Add to this the developments made possible by the social creation through language of practical and theoretical reason,

and the personal significance of social relations becomes overwhelming. In a fundamental sense persons as we know them are necessarily social constructions. And society itself is thus not a contingent arrangement of individual persons. It is a network of socially constructed individuals who within that network have the capacities for choice for the formation of their own patterns of life and the modification of their social networks. In these terms the good life as the rational life is conceivable only as a life personally and progressively built from possibilities available within the traditions of the social groupings we do and can inhabit. But these possibilities can themselves give us opportunity to contribute individually to the development of new and more rational personal and social activities and relationships. In certain contexts doing that is no doubt part of what a rational life would require. It is however important to recognise that one cannot escape the inevitable personal and social implications of existing relations and traditions. We have in human societies needed specific social practices that are rational in varying ways and to varying degrees. Within these, individual rational lives are possible, again in varying ways and to varying degrees. The good life individually is thus in a very real sense engaging in the socially constructed rational practice of engaging in specific rational practices for the satisfaction of wants. And such a pursuit necessarily includes the promotion of rational practices as social institutions.

From this point of view we must first recognise that education can no longer be rationalistically planned. As a social practice itself, it can only be rationally developed in practice and that in relation to other social practices with which it is tightly interlocked. From what I have argued, all that philosophy can do as a theoretical form of knowledge is necessarily indirect. But by considering the presuppositions behind educational practice, examining its nature and purpose as I am seeking to do in this essay, philosophy can at least propose ways of reconceiving the enterprise that might enable it the better to satisfy our aspirations. But granted that, if we stick with the notion that education is concerned with developing the good life then it follows from what I have said that we are mistaken if we conceive that purpose as primarily the acquisition of knowledge. What is required rather is the development by individuals of the overall rational practice of specific rational practices. There is, however, no way in which this can be either begun or continued in education except by pursuing the satisfaction of given wants and the exercise of given developing capacities in substantive specific practices available in existing social groups. The content of education must therefore be conceived as primarily initiation into certain substantive social practices. Such practices, as I have used that term, are centrally patterns of activity engaged in individually or collectively which have been socially developed or constructed. They are complex interrelated packages of such elements as actions, knowledge, judgements, criteria of success, values, skills, dispositions, virtues, feelings, indeed elements from across the full range of the achievements that human capacities make possible. Education in these terms will necessarily involve the acquisition of knowledge and the development of a person. But what knowledge is acquired or what development of a person will result is not the first determining consideration. That is

rather that the individual be initiated into those practices that will at every stage of their history constitute the good life for that individual.

At the start of education what those practices are must be determined by others. They must choose these in relation to both the emerging given capacities of the individual and the physical and social context. In engaging rationally in the practice of education others will thus progressively select the practices they consider most defensible for the individual for present immediate wants and for the future development of the good life. As the individual's wants, capacities and achievements develop, so the practices education involves must become more and more the subject of the individual's own modification and choice in rational terms. This suggests that education will be likely to involve practices in at least three distinguishable domains. First there will be all those very, varied basic practices necessary for any individual to be rationally viable in their given everyday physical, personal and social contexts. Second, there will be practices from that much wider range of optional practices available for the construction of each individual rational life. Both these kinds of practices will inevitably figure in education from its beginnings. Progressively, however, if that life is to continue to develop its rational character, there must be developed practices of a third kind. These will be 'second-order' to the first two categories, being constituted of critical reflection on the latter. By these second-order practices, already acquired first-order practices can be modified in personal rational judgement and new practices can be pursued as judged best in the self-direction of life in detail and overall. Amongst this rich diversity of practices, those concerned with the systematic pursuit of theoretical or academic knowledge I see as falling within the second category, and as likely to figure as major elements in the life of relatively few. They are, however, as I have argued, crucially important for all, as their specialist achievements contribute substantively, if only indirectly, to the rational development of the many practices in all three categories. Theoretical or academic knowledge is important in the social development of the practices of critical reflection that the good life requires. They are, however, not themselves in general necessary for the individual's conduct of the good life. Their place in education was thus seriously mistaken in the 'rationalist' approach.

IV

In the light of these considerations, I now, not surprisingly, consider the notion of Liberal Education for which I argued in the 1960s and 1970s to be misconceived in certain important respects, which have little to do with many of the more specific objections that have been voiced against it. I still hold that forms of theoretical knowledge can be distinguished in terms of the logical features and truth criteria of the propositions with which they are primarily concerned. I still consider the propositional elements in moral, religious and aesthetic understanding to be central

to the proper characterisation of these areas, though I now take a different view as to how those elements are best construed. The main error in my position was seeing theoretical knowledge as the logical foundation for the development of sound practical knowledge and rational personal development. Education in theoretical forms of knowledge was seen as ultimately fundamental to everything else in education. For psychological or other contingent reasons, education may at many stages turn out to be best approached through practical concerns or work on a topic basis. But beneath these approaches logically coherent mastery of distinct forms of knowledge had to be recognised as the key to all fundamental progress. Of course I now consider practical knowledge to be more fundamental than theoretical knowledge, the former being basic to any clear grasp of the proper significance of the latter. But my argument now is not merely for the priority of practical knowledge in education, but rather for the priority of personal development by initiation into a complex of specific, substantive social practices with all the knowledge, attitudes, feelings, virtues, skills, dispositions and relationships that that involves. It is those practices that can constitute a flourishing life that I now consider fundamental to education. What is more, the idea that a curriculum might be organised in terms of significant practices is thus not merely a contingent matter. Such organisation, rather than attention to the forms of knowledge, becomes a necessary demand, if violence is not to be done to the very nature of the achievements a worthwhile education pursues.

But worthwhile education conceived in these terms requires initiation into the practices of critical reflection on the fundamental substantive practices it basically involves, not merely immersion in these basic practices. Such reflection, however, directed at the modification of basic practices both socially and personally, is itself a matter of practical reason, though this requires consideration of presuppositions within practice in the light of abstracted theoretical study. Such education therefore requires the capacity to appreciate the significance of the achievements of theoretical reason for the development of the basic practices in which one participates. Though engaging in theoretical practices can contribute to a grasp of their significance for other basic practices, I suggest it is in general impossible for worthwhile education to engage directly in these theoretical pursuits. I suggest it is rather part of the social responsiblity of theoretical specialists to engage in wide public dialogue about the significance of their work for non-theoretical pursuits, thus providing a context of public critical reflection on social practices on which educators can draw. Sophisticated work in political, social and personal education is nowadays increasingly engaged in the kind of critical reflection on political, social and moral practices that I have in mind. It draws freely on philosophical, psychological and sociological studies without presuming to educate pupils in these theoretical disciplines directly. If I were now to formulate a concept of Liberal Education, I should be inclined to do this in terms of developing capacities for critical reflection across the range of basic practices necessary to any flourishing life within a given context. But I am no longer convinced of the need for such a particular distinctive notion.

Finally, I wish to draw attention to the implications of the foregoing for moral, religious and aesthetic education. Though willing to accept that the prime concern of all these three areas might well be action or experience rather than knowledge and understanding, I held a theoretical education in each to be fundamental to the achievement of any such wider personal or social goals. But if, instead of being conceived as rationalistically grounded in theoretical understanding, each is taken to be an area of social practices developed *sui generis,* its educational rationale is manifestly transformed. What then becomes crucial is directly introducing pupils to the kinds of practices each area involves and to critical reflection on these. It is the progressive development of the complex desires and satisfactions the practices encompass as elements within a coherent form of flourishing life that matters. The formal, theoretical, rather than practical, consideration of moral principles, religious doctrines and artistic canons becomes secondary and specialist rather than primary and general. Perhaps the distortion to the educational significance of these areas in my earlier approach was more severe than that done to the domains of the natural and social sciences, mathematics and philosophy. At least the latter can indeed with some confidence be said to be primarily areas of theoretical knowledge and understanding. But that is little consolation if even their educational purport was as misconceived as I am now arguing. If that is indeed the case then what matters next is whether my insistence on the primacy of practices in education is in fact any more defensible.[2]

Notes

1.   This paper was given at the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain Conference in 1992 and is a revised and extended version of a paper first given in 1991 to the American Philosophy of Education Society under the title 'Educational Aims: Their Nature and Content'.

2.   It will be apparent that the ideas in this chapter owe much to the writings of numerous contemporary philosophers, particularly those concerned with developing a more Aristotelian approach to our understanding of persons, practice, and the good life. In particular I have been influenced by the work of John Kekes (*The Examined Life,* London: Associated University Presses, 1988), Glen Langford (*Education, Persons and Society,* London: Macmillan, 1985), Alasdair McIntyre (*After Virtue,* London: Duckworth, 1981), Michael Polanyi (with H. Prosch, *Meaning,* Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1975), Charles Taylor (*Sources of the Self,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), and John White (*Education and the Good Life,* London: Kogan Page, 1990). It will be apparent also that I have made eclectic use of their ideas and have espoused a position that they might well all radically reject. I have therefore deliberately not attributed ideas to particular individuals, as I alone must accept responsiblity for what is here set out. Nevertheless, to these distinguished authors I am deeply indebted.