



Professor Richard Pring

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'What counts as an educated person in this day and age?'

What Counts as an Educated Person?

In addressing the question ‘What counts as an educated person?’, I want to point to a central feature of being a person, namely the capacity and the disposition to pursue the ‘good life’, that is, a life which is shaped by both knowledge and virtues. This is worth saying because it is rarely recognised by those who shape educational policy, and it too often remains but implicit in the practice of our schools, for reasons (not of the schools’ fault) that I shall explain. Policy is understandably shaped by perceived economic needs. But increasingly the economic imperative reigns supreme, and the consequent shift in the language of education, reflecting such an imperative, undermines and subverts the language of ‘the personal’, and thus of the ‘educated person’.

Throughout what I say, I am thinking of Ix. When I was appointed to teach in a London comprehensive school in 1965, the head teacher asked me what I had studied at the university. When I replied ‘philosophy’, he said ‘I thought so – I am giving you the slow learners’. In the second week of my teaching Ix (the fifth stream of a five-stream comprehensive school) we received a visit from the head-teacher who told Ix that they had to work very hard. Otherwise they would end up as street-cleaners or bin-men. This however worried me, so early in my teaching career. The parents of Ix were the street cleaners and bin-men of Kentish Town, or in other such lowly occupations. Can there not be *educated* street cleaners and bin-men – perhaps not academic high fliers, but with the qualities and capacities, nurtured through education, which enables them to flourish as persons, to have a sense of personal fulfilment, and to enrich the life of the inter-personal community in which they live and work?

The answer, of course, must lie in what it means to be a person and to be one more fully.

What follows, therefore, is divided as follows.

First, I point to the insidious growth of ‘the impersonal’ - the subversion of our language through which the aims of education are addressed, and through which the likes of Ix are left little affected by their education, disillusioned, with low self-respect.

Second, by contrast, I examine more closely the idea of being ‘a person’, and of being one more abundantly, for that remains central to the educational enterprise, namely:

- *the development of knowledge and understanding*. Can those, whose lack of knowledge is reflected in their poor performance in the ever frequent tests and examinations, be regarded as educated?
- *the development of the moral life* with particular reference to the virtues of ‘caring’ and of ‘self-respect’;
- *the development of a sense of community* in preparation for living within the wider society.

Third, I briefly raise questions about the sort of system of education required for promoting such aims.

Finally, I conclude by pleading: ‘bring back teaching’.

I The growth of the ‘impersonal’, (or ‘Watch your language’ - was not Orwell right after all?)

Currently, in England, teaching is frequently referred to in government documents as ‘delivering the curriculum’ – a curriculum increasingly devised by an all-powerful Secretary of State (not part of the teacher’s job).

The tone was reflected by the Labour Government’s White Paper, *21st Century Schools: your child, your schools, our future: building a 21st century schools system*. As the Children’s Minister declared:

It is fundamentally a deep cultural change. It is about changing boundaries of professional behaviour and thinking in a completely different way.¹

So, what are the clues to the ‘deep cultural change’ which create new ‘boundaries of professional behaviour’?

This ‘deep cultural change’, as outlined, said nothing about education, but the language gave the clue. ‘Performance’ and ‘performing’ were mentioned 121 times, ‘outcomes’ 55 times, ‘delivery’ 57 times. Libraries get no mention in the 21st century schools, and books only one – namely, in the section on Information Technology. The following statement sums it up perfectly.

It is only the workforce who can deliver *our* [i.e. the Government’s] ambition of improved outcomes.

Therefore, teaching was to be understood within a broader discourse of ‘performance indicators’ and ‘audits’, ‘inputs’ related to ‘outputs’, ‘target-setting’ and ‘efficiency gains’. Schools are increasingly run by ‘Executive Heads’ (the title of ‘head teacher’ is not grand enough or does not convey the essentially management role), or indeed by the Chief Executives of the Academy Chains, with their own targets. The executive heads work through ‘line managers’ to the teachers who ‘deliver’ the goods to the ‘consumers’ (that is, the pupils) according to agreed ‘targets’. Teaching therefore comes to be understood in the light of a particular *form of life*, for how we understand the social and moral world in which we live is shaped by the language through which it is described, explained and valued (as, indeed, George Orwell so clearly demonstrated). And that ‘form of life’ profoundly affects our understanding of education, and thereby of the role, training and continuing professional development of teachers.

Thus it was that, in January 2011, Sir Michael Barber (founder of the U.S. Education Delivery Unit, head of ‘global education practice’ for the world-renowned management consultancy McKinsey, chief education adviser to Pearson’s ‘the world’s leading learning company’ with profitable interests in 70 countries, and former chief education adviser to the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair) met with Kentucky Department of Education staff to share insights on ‘deliverology’. ‘Deliverology’ is the systematic process for ‘driving progress’ and ‘delivering results’ in education. It has the ‘tools’ with which teachers might *deliver* more effectively at the student level what is intended at the system level. These ‘tools’ enable the school reformers to

set precise and measurable targets, plan strategies for attaining those targets, gather the data on learner-by-learner performance, monitor that data and then, in the light of the monitoring, solve any problems which are related to the implementation of the reforms as these are reflected in the targets.²

In what George Orwell would have described as the ‘newspeak’ of education, a new ‘deliverology language’ has developed in Britain and the USA, borrowed from the business world where *outputs* are related to *inputs* and where *effectiveness* in meeting the *performance indicators* is the key criterion of success. Schools are now subject to *audits* of their performance in relation to the *targets*, set ‘at the system level’. Teachers are seen as the *deliverers* of what, at a system level, has been prescribed. And they have to comply because, otherwise, the *customers* might take their custom elsewhere.

The problem was reflected in *A Survival Guide for College Managers and Leaders* by the Chief Executive (sic) of the Learning and Skills Improvement Service. Not one of the ten chapters was devoted to teaching or learning, and there was no mention of the distinctive educational purposes of further education, but much on efficiency gains, value for money, marketing products, income targets for each subject, examining performance, quality control. All the experts referred to came from management and business. It was assumed that the main purpose of further education is improved economic performance and that private firms offer the model for the public sector – and due reference was given to Woolworths (subsequently placed in administration).³

As a further illustration of this shift in the underlying understanding of public educational institutions, one might refer to the change in language and practices in universities, following the ‘efficiency review’ of the Jarratt Commission, established by the Committee of Vice-Chancellors in 1984.

The crucial issue is how a university achieves the maximum value for money consistent with its objectives (2.12)

Each department should maintain a profile of ‘indicators of performance’ to include standing costs of space, utilities (telephones, etc), market share of applications, class sizes, staff workloads, graduation rates and classes of degrees (3.33) .



A range of performance indicators should be developed, covering both inputs and outputs and designed for use both within individual universities and for making comparisons between institutions. (5.4)

The headships of departments ... ideally should be both a manager and an academic leader (4.27).

The language of performance management in the control of public services such as those of schools, colleges and universities was explained in a series of Government White Papers from HM Treasury and the Cabinet Office: for example, in 1998, *Public Services for the Future: Modernisation, Reform, Accountability*; and, in 1999, *The Government's Measures of Success: Outputs and Performance Analyses*, 1999.

But the contrast between 'oldspeak' and 'newspeak' is poignantly illustrated by Larry Cuban in his book *The Blackboard and the Bottom Line: Why Schools can't be Businesses*. Cuban meticulously shows through many examples, and through reference to pertinent documents, the many ways in which the world of business has shaped the aims and values, the governance and (above all) the language of education. The reaction in the past to the perceived failure of schools has been to run them more like businesses, and in doing so, to shift the moral language of education to that of the management theory which pervades the business world.

But can schools be run like businesses?

Perhaps the most succinct and effective response to this is given through Cuban's story which might be abbreviated as follows. A successful business man, dedicated to improving public schools, told an audience of teachers: 'if I ran my business the way you people operate your schools, I wouldn't be in business very long'. Cross-examined by a teacher, he declared that the success of his blueberry ice cream lay in the meticulous way in which he selected his blueberries, sending back those which did not meet the high quality he insisted upon. To this the teacher replied:

That's right ... and we can never send back our blueberries. We take them rich, poor, gifted, exceptional, abused, frightened ... we take them all. Everyone. And that ... is why it is not a business. It's a school.⁴

Within such a 'form of life', shaped by language, an industry has been created. Testing has swollen out of all proportion. So much hangs on the results of tests as they appear in the public league tables (for example, parental choice, head teachers' pay, teachers' promotion, school closure, enforced academisation). Inevitably, therefore, there is what one calls 'gaming', for example:

- the removal of a cohort of low achievers (one thinks of 1x or the 'bad blueberries') aged 15 from the school role at the Oxford Spires Academy (the policy seemingly of the academy chain CfBT) so that they would not take the public examinations, thereby enabling the school to charge up the league table;
- the division of university staff into those who are likely to score 3 in the Research Excellence Framework (thereby inflating the universities place in the research league table) and those, relegated to different conditions of service, who will be on teaching-only contracts;
- the teaching to the test as shown in such detail by Warwick Mansell in *Learning by Numbers*;5
- the cheating exemplified by the examiners from one examining board who were suspended over 'secret advice' to a gathering of teachers, admitting 'we are cheating. We're telling you the cycle of the compulsory question'
- the performance related pay of teachers militating against co-operation within a community of learners, just as competition between schools militates against the much needed co-operation (as in the case of the academy chain which patented the curriculum thinking of the teachers, thereby preventing their use by other schools)

The language of productivity and targets, the language of business management which has clearly defined specific objectives and where the success of the individual person is defined in terms of his or her contribution to the success of the business, affects how we see the pupils or students. They become a means to some other end, not ends in themselves. Many are thereby perceived as ineducable as that is defined by the performance tables.

We should be aware of the warning of Campbell's Law, with particular reference to the high stakes testing in the US:

Campbell's law stipulates that "the more any quantitative social indicator is used for social decision-making, the more subject it will be to corruption pressures and the more apt it will be to distort and corrupt the social processes it was intended to monitor. Campbell warned us of the inevitable problems associated with undue weight and emphasis on a single indicator for monitoring complex social phenomena. In effect, he warned us about the high-stakes testing program that is part and parcel of *No Child Left Behind*.⁶

II On being and developing as a person

Those who know University College London, should look up to the second floor window of 19 Gordon Square where they may still see the ghost of A.J. Ayer, whose *Language, Truth and Logic* dominated English philosophy for a generation. The meaning of a proposition is its mode of verification, namely, either that of empirical observation (e.g. science) or that which is true by reference to the principle of contradiction (e.g. mathematics).⁷ Gone, therefore, as *meaningless* are statements about moral values, educational aims, or human nature. The concept of 'the person' must be reduced to what can be physically observed. Therefore, the question I have been invited to answer (namely, 'What counts as an educated person') cannot be meaningfully asked.

This, you might say, is but the esoteric debate of philosophers, removed from the practical deliberations of those engaged in education. But is it? The inheritors of that logical positivism of Ayer are those who transform the language of values to that which is measurable, who reduce educational aims to observable targets, who see 'education' as but the means to some further non-educational end (high grades, better job, employers' needs, place in the league tables). There is little room in this changed language of education (of

targets, performance indicators, audits, payment by results, and *delivery* of the curriculum) for seeing education, not as a means to an end, but as a transforming of the persons themselves – as the route (or the different routes) through which young people learn to develop as persons, as recognising what it means to be human as Jerome Bruner argued⁸, or as, in the words of Michael Oakeshott, making one's *debut dans la vie humaine*.

But if you peep behind the spectre of A.J.Ayer at the first floor window of 19 Gordon Square, you may see another ghost – the severe and sad looking one of John Macmurray, who preceded Ayer as Grote Professor of Logic at UCL, but the memory of whom was forgotten awhile under the blitz of the logical positivism of his successor. For Macmurray, far from reducing everything to what is a construction from the observable and measurable, spoke of the 'form of the personal'.⁹

To speak of 'the form of the personal' as an indispensable category, through which we recognise others and relate to them, is to indicate that there is something distinctive about calling someone 'a person' which requires a logically different way of describing, evaluating and understanding what is so described (having the capacity to think, to feel, to deliberate on the life worth living, to take on responsibilities) – and thereby of what it means to *develop* as a person. In failing to see that distinctiveness (as when, for example, the 'personal' is subsumed under the very different language of 'performance management'), young persons become the *means to the institutional ends*, not ends in themselves. The aims of education are narrowed to *measurable performances* (dictated by those in power), not broadened to the transformation of the capacities of each person for living a flourishing life. Teachers become *deliverers of the curriculum* (written elsewhere), not, as Peter Abbs argues, 'the critical guardians of a long culture'.¹⁰

Therefore, let us look more closely at what Macmurray could mean by the 'form of the personal', and by what the philosopher Michael Oakeshott means, quoting Paul Valery, by education as *un debut dans la vie humaine*'.

Knowledge and understanding: the conversation between the generations

According to Oakeshott, given the distinctive notion of 'the personal' and of what it means

to 'become human', a different language is required for an account of education, a different metaphor from that which draws upon the management-speak of those who shape our educational encounters. Education is an *engagement* between learners, on the one hand, and, on the other, what others have said and done. In this engagement, Oakeshott likens education to a

conversation – an endless unrehearsed intellectual adventure in which, in imagination, we enter into a variety of modes of understanding the world and ourselves. [It is] an initiation into the art of this conversation between the generations of mankind.¹¹

in which we begin to recognise the voice of science, the voice of history, the voice of poetry, the voice of religion, the voice of philosophy, and in which we learn

to distinguish their different modes of utterance, and to acquire the intellectual and moral habits appropriate to this conversational relationship.

Education, therefore, is a bringing to bear upon the yet unformed minds of the young the cultural riches we have inherited, through which we come to understand more deeply the physical, social and moral worlds we inhabit.

And if phrases like 'cultural riches' or, in Matthew Arnold's words, 'the best that has been thought and said' seem a little far-fetched for Ix, think again of what good drama teachers can achieve with them, drawing upon their familiarity with, and participation in, the arts or with the bible stories that had been a source of inspiration for generations, irrespective of academic prowess. Think, too, of the transformative effect of the humanities (given the grasp and love of history or literature that the good teacher brings to the classroom) on all young people who are trying to make sense of their social and personal lives.

The great medieval historian, Dr. Marjorie Reeves, writing in her memoirs about her teaching

of history to girls in the East End of London in the late 1920s, complained that the prevailing idea of history teaching wavered between lists of facts and dates, failing to open up the 'three-dimensional perspective of depth to their own past and to an understanding of others' ideas and points of view. She, therefore, produced her series of *Then and There* books which were still being used in schools half a century later – flesh and blood accounts of real happenings with which the learners could associate. These learners included the future hair dressers of Tower Hamlets, for whom she developed a history course, blossoming out into a cultural history from Egypt to the 18th century and involving the imitation of hairstyles of ancient Egypt – a surprising sight at that time in Tower Hamlets.

Yet again, to see how the English Ballet's production of Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* (with a caste taken entirely from disenfranchised, excluded, disadvantaged young people, and with its themes of dysfunctional families, street fights and knife crime) was to see how young lives can be turned round through educational engagement in becoming part of that conversation between the generations. When Emma, who took the part of Lady Capulet, was asked what taking part in the ballet had done for her, she replied that it had transformed her life – she now understood her mum. Possibly such an answer would not get A Grade in GCSE (or even a D), but surely educationally it was worth a hundred A grades in the impact which the performance had upon her understanding and emotions, and on her sense of personal worth. As the Chair of the Arts Council argued, 'It was an inspired choice of story: star-crossed lovers, dysfunctional families, gang warfare, macho games, self-harm, drug abuse, and knife crime; [Shakespeare] had them all.

Through participation in ballet (and one might speak equally of all the performing arts) so these young people were able to get deeper insight into human relationships and emotions which are encapsulated in those arts, and which have a universal as well as a personal dimension. Moreover, three years after the performance, all those young people – once excluded, disenfranchised, seemingly ineducable – were all in employment, many in the arts and associated technical aspects.

That conversation, of which Oakeshott spoke, engages the feeling as well as the understanding. Indeed, why should they be seen as opposites? Poetry, drama, art, literature, the Bible stories, the Church's liturgy – chosen by the wise teacher to touch the concerns, aspirations, and understandings of the learners in their charge – transform how one feels and sees one's life. The humanities and the arts are surely the sources from which previously unquestioned



values are probed and challenged, the sources through which, in the words of Marjorie Reeves, they know who they are, where they have come from and thereby who they might become. How different is that from a view of history teaching which, in Michael Gove's rewriting of the history syllabus, pupils from the age of 5-to 11 have to cover the thousand years from pre-historic times to 1066, and thereafter to the Act of Union in 1707, with special reference to key people in our history, such as Clive of India – at least until Simon Schama at the Hay Festival, referred to Clive of India as nothing other than a sociopathic, corrupt thug. Thus enlightened, Mr Gove removed Clive from the compulsory curriculum.

Intelligent practice

But in arguing for the centrality of knowledge and understanding in the development of the educated person, one too often adheres to a narrow interpretation of such knowledge and understanding – as in the renown given to what are referred to as the academic subjects, as opposed to the 'vocational'. This dualism between the academic and the vocational is rarely questioned, thereby disenfranchising so many pupils who, like Ix, learn more effectively through practical engagement. After all, is not one definition of 'academic' in the Oxford English Dictionary, that of 'abstract, unpractical, cold, merely logical'. It was, therefore, unfortunate that Mr. Gove should not have included Design and Technology within his EBacc – along with, it should be noted, art and drama. But as Richard Sennett so powerfully argues in his book *The Craftsman*,

History has drawn fault lines dividing theory and practice, technique and

expression, craftsman and artist, maker and user; modern society suffers from this historical inheritance. But the past life of craft and craftsmen also suggests ways of using tools, organising bodily movements, *thinking* about materials which

remain alternative, viable proposals about how to conduct life with skill.¹²

Indeed, Maththew Crawford, the philosopher turned motor mechanic, in his book *The Case for*



Working with Your Hands, shows the problems arising from the separation of thinking from doing

The disappearance of tools from our common education is the first step towards a wider ignorance of the world of artifacts we inhabit.¹³

Formal education has a key role in ensuring the continuation of such practical capabilities (the intelligent arts and skills of living) just as much as it has of initiating young people into the different modes of understanding and appreciating the world. Indeed, are not the so-called academic achievers also ill-served if they remain in that 'wider ignorance of the world of artifacts we inhabit'? And may it not be the case that Ix could display their intelligent potential if we did not draw fault lines between theoretical and practical? Some of course escape. Recently, and after 40 years, I received a communication from a pupil of Ix to thank me for teaching him to tell the time and to read, and to invite me to visit him as the director of the large engineering workshop at a Russell Group University.

Moral seriousness

The idea of education being a transformation of the person, rather than a the transmission of knowledge, the discriminating insight into the life worth living rather than the attainment of performance targets, the integration of understanding and feeling rather than their isolation, was forcefully expressed by the Principal of an American High School which I visited in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She sent the following letter to the new teachers joining the school.

Dear Teacher

I am the survivor of a concentration camp. My eyes saw what no man should witness:

Gas chambers built by learned engineers.

Children poisoned by educated physicians.

Infants killed by trained nurses.

Women and children shot and burned by high school and college graduates.

So, I am suspicious of education.

My request is: Help your students become human.

Your efforts must never produce learned monsters, skilled psychopaths, educated Eichmans.

Reading, writing, arithmetic (one might add 'getting lots of GCSEs and A Levels') are important but only if they serve to make our children more human.

Those engineers, physicians, nurses, college graduates had all been educated in the descriptive sense, but was there not something lacking which would make us want to deny to them the title of 'educated persons'? Is there not a moral dimension – the possession of particular values, the exercise of certain virtues, and a moral seriousness - which should shape and direct their learning as engineers, as physicians, as nurses and as college graduates.

But those values, that exercise of virtues, that moral seriousness, as well as both the sophisticated knowledge of the engineers, physicians, nurses and college graduates and the less sophisticated knowledge for everyday survival have to be learnt – all that constitutes being human.

To quote, once again, Michael Oakeshott:

This inseparability of learning and being human is central to our understanding of ourselves. It means that none of us is born human; each is what he has learnt to become. It means that what characterises a man is what he has learnt to perceive, to think and to do ...¹⁴

Jerome Bruner took up this theme of education as being an introduction to the distinctively human life. Learning to be human was at the centre of his educational enterprise. The three key questions which shaped his programme, *Man: a Course of Study*, were ‘What is human about human beings?’, ‘How did they get that way?’, ‘How can they be made more so?’ One of the distinctive features of being human, and thus of ‘being made more so’ was ‘the drive to explicate and represent the world’. Such an integrative enterprise opens up the myths and stories of the past, the forces and happenings which shaped both the present and one’s own place within the present. Furthermore, such myths, stories, forces and happenings are always open to deeper understandings, further clarification and critical appraisal in the light of experience, argument, evidence and new sources of information. There comes, through enquiry, a more profound perception of the cultures from which we and others derive our different identities as human beings. But, alas, *Man: a Course of Study* disappeared from our schools with the onset of the National Curriculum, tests and performance measures.¹⁵

Sense of community – and the virtue of caring

The propensity or disposition to act according to what is perceived to be good is called ‘virtue’. Often we lack the requisite virtue – courage, for instance, or patience – and it is surely an educational task to transform what might be a struggle to do what is right into a disposition to do so. Such a transformation is effected in many different ways, but particularly through the embodiment of those virtues in a way of life - in the school, family or church community, into which the learner is being initiated. Lawrence Kohlberg of Harvard University, whose extensive research on the development of the concept of fairness, discovered that no amount of principled and subtle thinking about fairness would result in the students acting fairly. Hence, Kohlberg’s creation of the Just Community School – an example of which was that very High School in Cambridge, Massachusetts whose principal I quoted earlier.

I want to illustrate this by reference to the virtue of ‘caring’, about which the philosopher, Nel Noddings has written much.¹⁶

Essential to being, and to becoming more fully, a person is to be able to recognise others as

well as oneself as a person – capable of understanding, seeking personal fulfilment, worthy of respect. It involves entering into relationships with others and a caring for others in one's ever widening community. This is essential, too, for the intellectual endeavour. The intellectual virtues of caring for the truth, of openness to criticism and of perseverance are demanded in the co-operation with and the learning from others, in addressing problems and in opening the mind to further possibilities. As Noddings says, 'when I really care, I hear, see or feel what the other tries to convey'.

The development of the virtue of caring requires a 'caring community'. In the absence of such a community, many become disillusioned, outsiders. And even the apparently successful ones (those with high grades) have probably failed to see this connection of their learning with the possible fruitfulness of such learning for others as well as for oneself.

Let me provide an example of a school I am closely associated with, which puts the pursuit of the virtue of caring at the very centre of its educational programme

A class of 10 year olds were gathered together for the weekly sharing of their problems (often very personal) and their reactions to them. The school was in one of the most disadvantaged districts of England. Of the class of 30, 11 were on the social services' 'at risk' register. The father of one boy had just been murdered on the nearby estate. But over the last couple of years they had learnt the rules for engaging in discussion: only one person at a time (he or she who holds the ball); nothing hurtful of another in the group to be allowed; everyone to listen to what each says; none forced to speak, though everyone has the opportunity to do so. It was crucial to have developed a safe environment in which each could speak honestly about what he or she thought and felt. They were talking about events in their lives which they had found hurtful. Some were of bullying. One was of the anger of her stepfather who had confined her to her bedroom. Discussion was of how one felt, how to deal with one's feelings, how to manage the situation. The courage in engaging in such personal exposure and the caring reactions of the others were quite remarkable. But that atmosphere of interpersonal support and caring resulted from a whole-school policy, and one which involved the parents and carers, many of whom did not initially possess the skills and attitudes which prevailed within the schools

At the core of that personal development, as argued above, lie qualities of personal relations,



self-esteem and emotional well-being. Such qualities can remain undeveloped, indeed stunted by the social conditions and relations in which young people live at home and in their wider social networks. They can so easily be ignored in the pursuit of an academic but narrow conception of the educated person. As Kohlberg argued, it is difficult to foster moral attitudes and principled thinking unless these are embodied in the very institutions in which they are being fostered.

Crucial to the development of the 'educated person', therefore, is the institutional framework in which that sense of a caring community flourishes – where everyone (including members of Ix), whatever their ability, is respected as having a part to play – the sense of solidarity which provides the ethical foundation for citizenship. The fortunate amongst us recognise a mutual interest with, and a care for, the less fortunate.

But this remains increasingly difficult in a society where such a large number of young people, whether or not they extend their formal learning into university, are denied the employment and career opportunities which give them a sense of purpose, the dignity of labour, a standing in the adult world into which they are entering. That is why the pursuit of genuinely educational aims – the fostering of educated persons – is a responsibility which goes beyond the school gates and involves the wider society. If we want an educated society, then the burden does not fall uniquely on the school and its teachers. The development of a caring community for all, in which is developed for everyone hope, respect and a sense of dignity, requires collaboration between schools, employers and the wider community.

Without that, one can see, in so many, a sense of disillusion and hopelessness. David Lammy's (Member of Parliament for Tottenham) gave an excellent account of the August riots in North London. It shows how that sense of hopelessness in not feeling part of a wider community, in which there were shared interests, leads to anti-social behaviour of disillusioned young people who feel they have no stake in the wider society.¹⁷

And so, the educated person, may not be academically shining, may not score high in the examinations, but would have this sense of direction in life activities, informed by a critical sense of what is worthwhile, of what has wider social usefulness, and through which he or she gains a sense of personal worth. But the achievement of that requires a wider caring community.

III The system of education: the common school

Those who have been to New York may well have visited Ellis Island, the port of entry to the United States for almost a century for people from so many ethnic groups from all over the world – mainly poor, often illiterate, speaking many different languages, escaping to what they hoped would be a better land. The question posed, especially by the philosopher John Dewey, was how from such a culturally diverse group of people could one create a cohesive society – a common citizenry with a common culture? Was not Tawney correct in arguing that ‘what a community requires, as the word itself suggests, is a common culture, because, without it, it is not a community at all?’

The common school would foster those shared aims and values, and those academic, aesthetic and craft traditions that have been inherited and that enrich the broader community, of which the school is part and for which it is a preparation. Such diversity in religion, ethnicity, social background should, in Dewey’s scheme of things, be regarded as a benefit rather than a handicap – the basis for growth of each individual as each learnt from the other, and then come to see his or her own values in a different perspective. Mutual respect and caring would be nurtured where too often resentment and antagonism prevail. Are not such mutual respect and such learning from differences part of the educated person?

And yet in our present system we are increasingly seeing, on the one hand, the growing fragmentation of the school system – with academy chains, free schools, City Technology Colleges, private schools, different kinds of faith schools, each with its own admissions code. The school system seems to be promoting difference rather than togetherness, mutual misunderstanding rather than mutual respect. The voices for the common school seem faint indeed.

On the other hand, though there may be much common ground concerning the overall aims of education – namely, what counts an educated person – there are inevitably differences based on different moral and religious traditions. The former Chief Rabbi, Jonathan Sacks puts it well, speaking from within his own Jewish tradition:

This is a morality received not made, It is embedded in and reinforced by a total

way of life, articulated in texts, transmitted across the generations, enacted in rituals, exemplified by members of the community, and underwritten by revelation and tradition. It has not pretensions to universality. It represents what a Jew must do, in the full knowledge that his Christian neighbours in Mainz are bounded by a different code.¹⁸

It is the argument of the different faith traditions, first, that each embodies a particular view of what it is to be human and to be so more abundantly; second, that such a view of what it is to be human should permeate the educational enterprise; and, third, that from such a developed understanding of what it means to be human the student is able to make a more significant contribution to the wider pluralist community.

Thus, for example, this commitment to a valued way of life, formed through particular beliefs and practices, is well expressed in the Church of England's Consultation Report of 2000

Pupils will experience what it is like to live in a community that celebrates the Christian faith; to work within a framework of discipline and yet to be confident of forgiveness; to begin to share the Christian hope and the Christian experience.¹⁹

Thus, for example, the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education argues that the Catholic School 'has its place in any national school system', particularly since the values which it upholds could be undermined by the very different values within the wider more materialist and secular society in which, as Charles Taylor argues in *A Secular Age*, religion has been expelled from the public realm.

So, there is a dilemma I leave with you – so well rehearsed in the Education Act of 1902 and again in the 1944 Education Act, but once again (stimulated not a little by events in Birmingham) coming to the fore.

IV Bring back teaching

As a result of what I have said in this lecture, my final plea must be 'Bring back the teacher', whom John Dewey rather extravagantly referred to as 'the High Priest and the usherer in of the Kingdom of God'. Why is that?

To many he was 'the saviour of American education'. But to others, who felt that he had substituted socialisation for true education, he was seen to be 'worse than Hitler'. How can teachers, the 'high priests' and the 'usherers in of the Kingdom of God', possibly be worse than Hitler?

For Dewey, the teacher is the mediator of, on the one hand, the rich culture we have inherited in the arts, crafts, humanities, sciences and sense of community, and, on the other, the ways of thinking and valuing (limited though these may be) of the young learners. That is the distinctive role of the teacher – namely, to open the limited vision of the learners (yes, including Ix) to a deeper, more critical way of seeing the physical, social and moral worlds they inhabit. But that vision of teaching gets smothered by the concept of the teacher as the *deliverer* of a curriculum which has been imposed upon them from above, and whose *effectiveness* lies in hitting targets. Rather should the teacher be seen as the curriculum thinker and creator, not the deliverer. Language matters.

To that end, continuing professional development of teachers is essential if they are, first, to maintain the knowledge and love of that part of the conversation between the generations which they bring to the learners, and if they are, second, to enable Ix to make those connections between that conversation and their limited knowledge of the physical, social and moral worlds they inhabit.

The maintenance and continuing development of such knowledge and pedagogical skills, in which teachers seek continually to implement *their* critical understanding of an educated person in their classroom practices, is crucial to the development of educated persons. Such professional development – knowledge and research based, yet practical and critical – requires a continuing and close relationship between schools and universities, and between educational establishments and the economic community.

(Endnotes)

I But, as Peter Abbs so well describes the situation we are in:

teachers [increasingly] become the technicians of subjects, not the critical guardians of a long culture; nor the midwives of the creative potentialities of living children.²⁰

Indeed, teachers become increasingly redundant, as Information Technology systems 'deliver the product' more cheaply and effectively. According to Rupert Murdoch, 'you can get by with half as many teachers by using his computers'. Wireless Generation, bought by News Cor, produces the software which, it is claimed, can replace text-books and indeed aid teachers. But that is another and rather sinister story for another time. What must be borne in mind is that computers, with all their cleverness, partake of another language from that through which we address the question 'What counts as an educated person?'

Conclusion

By way of conclusion, I make the following pleas:

1. Watch your language (and read Orwell's *1984*)
2. Constantly ask the question, "What counts as an educated person in this day and age?"
3. Ensure the answer applies equally to 1x – they are developing persons, too.
4. Ensure the answer covers the range of qualities which make us distinctively human – including a sense of moral purpose and civic engagement.
5. Get rid of the impoverishing effect of high stakes testing.
6. Respect teachers, for there is no curriculum development without teacher development.

- i. DCSF, 2008, *21st Century Schools: Your Child, Your Schools, Our Future: building a 21st century school system*, London: DCSF
- ii. <http://www.kypost.com/dpp/news/state/institute-to-help-ramp-up-educational-improvement>
- iii. See Coffield, F., *Times Educational Supplement*, 24.07.09
- iv. Cuban, L., 2005, *The Blackboard and the Bottom Line: why schools cannot be businesses*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University press.
- v. Mansell, W., 2007, *Education by Numbers: the tyranny of testing*, London: Politico



- vi. See Berliner, D. and Nichols, S., 2007, *Collateral Damage: how high status testing corrupts American schools*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- vii. See Ayer, A.J., 1936, *Language, Truth and Logic*, London: Victor Gollanz, ch.1.
- viii. Bruner, J., 1966, 'Man: a course of study', in *Towards a Theory of Instruction*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- ix. Macmurray, J., 1957, *The Self as Agent*, London: Faber and Faber, p.12.
- x. Abbs, P., 1994, *The Educational Imperative*, London: Falmer Press, p.4
- xi. Oakeshott, M., 1975, 'A place of learning', reprinted in Fuller, M., ed., 1989, *Michael Oakeshott and Education*, New Haven: Yale University Press., p.39.
- xii. Sennett, R., 2008, *The Craftsman*, London: Penguin, p.11.
- xiii. Crawford, M., *The Case for Working with Your Hands*, London: Penguin, p.3.
- xiv. Oakeshott, M., *op.cit.*
- xv. Bruner, *op.cit.*
- xvi. Noddings, N., 1992, *The Challenge to Care in Schools*, New York: Teachers College Press
- xvii. Lammy, D., 2012, *Out of the Ashes: London after the riots*, London: Guardian Books.
- xviii. Sacks, J., 1997, *The Politics of Hope*, London: Jonathan Cape, p.89
- xix. Church of England, 2000, *Dearing Report, Church Schools as an Instrument of Revival for the Church of England*, London
- xx. Abbs, *op.cit.*

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